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THE

NEW GIL BLAS;

OR,

PEDRO OF PENAFLOR.

BY

HENRY D. INGLIS,

AUTHOR OF "SPAIN IN 1830," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

London:

PRINTED FOR

LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, GREEN, & LONGMAN.

1832.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY MANNING AND SMITHSON,
4, LONDON-HOUSE YARD.

823
Im 42m
1832
v. 3

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THE NEW GIL BLAS.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE RELATION OF THE PILGRIM.

“ My son,” replied the pilgrim, “ my history, if such it deserves to be called, would contribute but little to the satisfaction of your curiosity ; it would but explain the reason of my own preference of the monastic life, but would tell nothing of the reasons that weigh with others. Men’s inducements are various ; and might possibly appear to you unsatisfactory : for my own part, since you imagine it will give you pleasure, I am very willing to oblige one who has shown

me kindness, and to relate all that memory has preserved. The quiet, and peculiar occupations of a convent, have left me little leisure to keep up recollections of former years; and much has faded from my memory: I have no stirring or impassioned narrative to give;— 't will be little more than the course of such events as might easily happen to all; but such as it is, you are welcome to it." And accordingly the friar, without further preface, gave me the following simple narrative.

"THE world, my son, has not been to me faithless or barren, as you have supposed. I have no story of hopes deceived, or enjoyment dashed from me: early sorrows and afflictions, indeed, led me to renounce the world where I had found them; but they were not the sorrows

that spring out of men's passions,—they were rather the events of God's providence, sent to sober the mind, and to prepare it for a willing and perpetual worship.

“ I was born in the town of Torre-Viejo, on the sea-coast of Murcia: even if memory served me, it would be unnecessary to say any thing of the years of my infancy. I was the oldest of three children,—my brother Christoval was two years, and my sister Margarita three years younger than myself. We loved our parents, who doated on us; and we fondly loved each other. Ours was a happy childhood: our ages made us companions; and our tastes and dispositions sweetened our companionship. When we were children, we pulled the olives, and gathered the dates, and spread the figs together; and when we grew older, we helped our parents and each other, at the olive-press and the wine-

press: and let me not forget to say, that morning and evening we offered up our prayers together; and so our childhood passed. But now, our home became one of scarcely so much peace, and less a home of plenty. Misfortune came upon us; I hardly know of what kind,—but our olive-ground was sold; my father became less kind, my mother less cheerful; and we, less full of mirth and play. Ah! had but my father been resigned to the will of heaven! but he took to evil courses, and leagued himself with contrabandisters; and although plenty was again seen amongst us, it was plenty upon which the blessing of heaven did not descend.

“ There are four sad epochs in my life; and I have now reached the first. My father’s illegal trade was discovered; and the proof of his guilt and his consequent condemnation, rested upon the evidence of his son. Merciless policy of the

law,—to tempt a son to forget his God; or remembering God, to accuse his parent! I would not utter falsehood; I could not accuse my father; and I was silent: but silence was interpreted into confession; and I never saw my father more. He was sent to Ceuta, where no doubt he lived and died a convict. I felt that I was innocent of my father's misfortune; and yet I was constantly repeating to myself, 'I am the cause of his banishment,—I have to answer for the tears shed by my mother;' for though my devout mother never reproached me, I could perceive that she regarded me with somewhat altered feelings,—and that when her eyes filled with tears, she never failed to fix them upon me. I had also made a brother and a sister fatherless; but we only clung the closer to each other, and they loved me as before. But a second and fearful day was approaching.

“ When we were left fatherless, we were also left with small means of support; and my brother Christoval and myself spent some hours every morning in the bay,—sometimes on the rocks, sometimes in our little boat, fishing for sardiñas, which we used at home, or carried to Orihuela to market. One morning we left home as usual; walked down to the shore with our nets; leaped into our boat, and shoved it off into the bay. At this moment, fifty years seem to be annihilated; I see the cheerful face of my brother looking kindly upon me; and I hear him say, while bending over the side of the boat, ‘ If I should chance to fall in, Francisco, I know you could and would save me.’ Alas! too soon my power and my will were tried.

“ We were preparing to return home, and were busied drawing in our nets, when a misticó entering the bay unperceived by us, ran

down our little boat, and we were precipitated into the sea. My brother was unable to swim; and I seized him in my arms, and plied my strength to gain the nearest rocks; but ere I had half way bore him to safety, fear, dastardly fear, fell upon my heart. ‘We shall both perish,’ I exclaimed: ‘leave me, Francisco,’ said my brother, ‘leave me,—and do not leave Margarita without a protector.’ A horrid selfishness took hold upon me; it was not the loss of Margarita my sister, but of myself, that urged me. I might—ah! God forgive me—I believe I might have borne my Christoval to safety; but I obeyed him,—meanly, ungenerously, perhaps guiltily obeyed him: I shook my brother from me, and saved myself; and when, after the few moments in which exhaustion had deprived me of sense, I raised myself up, the dead body of Christoval had floated to my feet. Long and

bitterly, the recollection of this hour pursued me, even far into the years of my monastic life; and sincerely I wept the human weakness, if not the guilt, that had deprived me of a brother. Two brothers had left home, and the elder only returned! ‘Where is my son,—ah! what hast thou done with my Christoval?’ and the only answer I could make, were my own reproaches.

“ Still there was my sister, my dear Margarita left: if she blamed me, she never betrayed her thoughts; she saw that I was unhappy, and she endeavoured to console me. We were closer bound in affection than ever; for nothing binds affection like a common subject of sorrow; and I vowed internally, that life should be devoted to the happiness of Margarita, and the consolation of my mother; but a new and awful event was approaching,—that which constitutes the third sad epoch of my life.

“ It was the evening before the nuptials of my sister,—for Margarita, although I had recommended to her the monastic life, had otherwise determined. Miguel de Paloso was her betrothed husband; and if my sister were to wed a human bridegroom, she could not have better chosen. The habitation of Miguel de Paloso, was one league from Torre-Viejo: and it was not without risk, that he was accustomed nightly to walk from our village to his own,—for Margarita was beautiful as she was good; and Miguel de Paloso had many rivals, and therefore many haters.

“ ‘ Francisco,’ said Margarita to me, as Miguel threw his cloak around him, and when I prepared to accompany him,—‘ I commit him to your care.’ Alas! had she forgotten her brother Christoval, that she would intrust to my keeping, one scarcely less dear. We left Torre-Viejo,

armed, and in company ; and scarcely had we left it, when we were set upon by three men also armed, and masked. Miguel buried his sword in the breast of one of the assailants,—‘ help, Francisco,’ cried he, ‘ we are now two to two.’ I could have laid one of our enemies dead at my feet, for my weapon was unsheathed, and in my hand ; but my arm was nerveless,—my mind reverted to my father, and to my brother Christoval ; and a strange and sudden conviction seized me, that I was pursued by a certain fatality, that caused the death of all who were intrusted to my care. It was not cowardice that held me motionless ; it was a palsy of the mind. ‘ Help me, Francisco,—help me, or I perish !’ I heard the appeal ; I saw the weapons of the two ruffians gleam in the moonlight ; and my own, I held motionless. I saw them pierce the bosom of my friend ; I saw him fall,—I heard him cry,

‘ Ah, Francisco !’ and I saw his death-face turned up to mine. Then, indeed, I recovered my senses and my energy,—I sprang like a tiger upon the murderers of Miguel, and avenged him ; but he was gone—for ever lost to Margarita.

“ It was thought I had bravely done ; for three ruffians were found dead—but I could not dismiss the look and the cry of my friend ; and although Margarita did not reproach me, every look seemed to say, ‘ why, Francisco, did I intrust him to thee ?’ I felt—I knew that I was innocent—as innocent as if I had been struck blind, or as if my arm had been fettered ; yet, I could not endure the tears of Margarita ; and something like remorse took possession of me, when I saw that she began to sink under her affliction. She was doomed speedily to follow her brother and her betrothed husband to the grave. I saw her fade away, and perish ; perish

in her youth;—and so a third, the closest of the links that bound me to the world, was dissolved.

“ One tie only remained—it was my mother. This dearly beloved, and devout parent, had recovered from her earlier misfortunes; or if remembered, they were remembered with a subdued spirit. For me, all her love had rekindled; and when Margarita was no more, our affection was drawn closer, for there was no one left with whom to divide it. And now the fourth, and last epoch of misfortune had nearly arrived: that which severed me from all earthly ties, and led me to renounce the world.

“ It was a sultry morning in August, when I left Torre-Viejo, upon my mule, to sell our sardiñas to the convent of San Felipe Neri at Orihuela. I reached Orihuela; sold my sardiñas; bought a present for my mother—for the next day was the feast of our patron-saint,—

and turned my mule's head towards my home. Scarcely had I left Orihuela, when a thick darkness crept over the sky, and darkened the atmosphere: a gloom, and dreadful stillness was on earth and sky; a stillness like that which will rest upon the grave before the resurrection: the darkness spread over earth and sea, and was deepest towards Torre-Viejo. As I passed the village of Pablo, a hollow sound seemed to rise from under my feet; I looked down, and I saw the earth move beneath me, like waves of the sea; I raised my eyes, and the tall date trees shook as if a storm rushed by, though the dead calm of nature was around. I heard the crash of human dwellings; and I saw the habitations of men sink into the yawning earth. 'T was but a moment—and the date groves were again still, and the earth was firm; but it was strewn with ruins! I thought of my mother, and my

home, and pressed on: I reached the height above the sea, below which lay Torre-Viejo; a dense cloud, black as night, hung over it, and rested upon it, and a thick poisonous vapour rose up to the brow of the hill. I threw myself from my mule, and ran down the steep. I entered the cloud that rolled below; and hastened onward to the well-known village, and found myself on the brink of a dark lake, wildly swelling, and throwing up a volume of sulphurous smoke. Torre-Viejo was swallowed up for ever! my home was no more! Father, brother, sister, had passed from me—and now the earth had entombed my mother, and my dwelling! the ties that bound me to the world, were dissolved: I had no relative—no home—no village! God had spared me from the wreck; and to whom then could I go, but to God? I fell upon my face, and vowed my life to Him whose hand had

been ever upon me, and who had thus led me from the world, to his sanctuary.

“ I turned away from the spot where Torre-Viejo had been, and sought Orihuela ; I saw the friars of the order to which I belong—John of God—hurrying through the streets, to succour those whom calamity had reached ; and in imitation of their founder, bearing in their arms, the maimed and mutilated. I sought admission at their convent-gate ; within its walls, I served my noviciate, and spent the first ten years of my monastic life ; and on the death of the Sacristan of the same order, at Toledo, I was transferred to the convent in that city, whither I am now pursuing my way. There I have lived contented and happy : no merit rests with me for preferring the services of my convent, to the world which it shuts out—for the world had forsaken me, ere I abandoned it. In the early misfor-

tunes that overtook me, I have long since learned to perceive the finger of God ; and whatever guilt may have mingled with them, God has, I trust, forgiven. In the pilgrimage that I have now accomplished, I have satisfied the only desire to which this world could give rise : I have now done with it. To serve God during the few years that yet remain to me, is henceforth my only vocation ; and when it pleases Him to withdraw me from his earthly service, I trust to meet in heaven those whom I once loved, and whom death early overtook, and for whose admission into Paradise I have never failed to offer a mass daily, since the hour in which I was severed from the world.

“ Such, my son, is the relation which I promised thee : it has nearly worn out our fire and our oil ; and as to-morrow early we must needs be journeying, it is time to commend ourselves

to the protection of heaven through the night-watches;”—and so saying, the good friar reached down one of the little lamps that was suspended from the beam over our heads, and with a blessing upon my rest, retired to his mattress.

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN WHICH THE READER IS INTRODUCED TO AN OLD
ACQUAINTANCE.

THE following morning, our journey and our conversation were renewed,—and urging our mules forward, we arrived soon after mid-day in the ancient city of Toledo; and with many blessings from the pilgrim, which I have a notion were not thrown away, I parted from him, and rode into the marble-paved court-yard of the posada de los Reyes.

Toledo! I will remember thee all my days; with thy narrow winding streets,—thy round-faced and tun-bellied canons and prebendaries;

thy starved and lank *curas*; thy cloaked cabaleros, and veiled *señoras*; thy multitudinous friars, and latticed nuns; thy splendour, and thy ruins; thy beggary, and thy wealth; and the fair devotee, the continuation of whose history is deserving of having a chapter exclusively dedicated to it.

The attractions of a tolerable stew, and La Mancha wine, held me in the posada till near sunset; and when I entered the cathedral aisles, they were already wrapped in gloom. The pictures and images of the many saints, and their sacred niches, were lighted by the expiring and fitful gleam of the solitary candles, which were almost burnt in their sockets; the major altar only, was still illuminated by a multitude of tapers—which threw a faint gleam beyond the gilded railings, upon the marble-chequered floor, and between the massive pillars. The favourite

saints had already granted all the petitions that had been put up to them—for the kneelers had all left their altars, to prepare the gazpacho; and the last devotee, an old beggar, had hobbled away from the altar of the Miraculous Image as I approached it; “*Un Pobre,*” said the old woman, as she passed by, holding out her hand to receive charity—and dropping a few quartos into it, I heard the little door swing to; and was left, as I thought, alone in the cathedral.

Walking slowly through the dark aisles, I fancied I could hear at the farthest extremity, a shuffling sound, like something sweeping along the floor; and curiosity led me forward. As I approached nearer, I perceived, by the light which at intervals gleamed athwart the aisle from the niche of some honoured saint, that it was a female, who, upon her knees, was making the circuit of the cathedral; doubtless as a

penance for some enormity, or frailty: her hood, for she wore the dress of a penitent—was closely drawn over her head and neck; but as she passed the altars of the more influential saints, she partly uncovered her face, and addressed a prayer to them.

A penance so singular, naturally excited my curiosity respecting the penitent; for although some years' experience of the world had considerably sobered my character, the spirit of adventure was not extinct; and the glimpse of the form I had seen, and the small white clasped hands, had awakened a strong desire to see the countenance of the devotee.

Every one knows how great a saint, St. Anthony of Padua is; and that he is the especial protector of helpless and sorrowing woman: judging, therefore, that the penitent would certainly put up a prayer at his altar, I stole

across to the opposite aisles, and concealing myself within the niche of St. Anthony, awaited the slow approach of the devotee. No place could have been better adapted for concealment; for the saint extends his arms to bestow a blessing on the suppliant, and at the same time extends his garment,—so that even if the altar had been lighted by more than one taper, the concealment behind so broad a figure as St. Anthony's would have been ample.

I had not been mistaken in my expectation: the penitent stopped in front of the altar, threw back her veil, and disclosed—judge of my unutterable astonishment—the countenance of Isabel!—Isabel, whose husband—the monster Andrades—I had killed at Seville four years ago;—Isabel, whom I forsook, and found again on the tower of Tarifa;—Isabel, by whose assistance I was restored to the world;—Isabel,

who fled with me along the desolate shore, and with whom I parted, at day-break, on the sea beach ! Scarcely two months had elapsed since that time, and how many and various had been my adventures,—how many dangers encountered, and overcome, or escaped,—how many strange histories interwoven with mine,—what turns of good fortune ;—and now, at Toledo, I saw Isabel kneel before the shrine of Saint Anthony of Padua, in the garb of a penitent ! All the history of our adventures, our meetings and our partings, passed in a moment of time through my memory : we had separated twice ; and twice had destiny interfered, and thrown us together, in circumstances too the most unlooked for—first in the dungeon-tower of Tarifa ; and now, by a fortune as singular, in the cathedral of Toledo.

Notwithstanding the agitation which this dis-

covery naturally occasioned, I was able to preserve silence while Isabel put up her prayer; for I was sensible that to have at that moment sprung from behind the image of St. Anthony, would have been a dangerous experiment upon a stronger intellect than that of Isabel. Here, her penance appeared to be ended, for she rose from her knees, and began to cross the aisle; I immediately left my concealment, and followed her with a light foot towards the door: it was closed: she recrossed the aisles to the opposite door, and it was closed; and for the first time, it occurred to me, that while standing behind St. Anthony, I had heard the iron clank of the ponderous gate that shut in the cathedral. “*Oh Dios!*” I heard, in Isabel’s well remembered voice, “I shall die of terror,” as I saw her lean against the pillar nearest to the door.

I now resolved to discover myself; for to all

appearance, it seemed likely that we should bear each other company till morning. I walked towards the spot where she stood,—and as she kept her eyes upon the person she saw approaching, I pronounced her name: a faint cry of mingled wonder and alarm, showed me that she recognised the voice of him who had been to her the origin of so much joy and so much sorrow,—and the next moment, she fell into my arms.

“Isabel,” said I, when she had recovered from the paroxysm of surprise into which my appearance had thrown her, “this is indeed a wonderful freak of fortune,—two months ago we separated on the coast of Andalusia; and here we are met, a hundred leagues distant, in the centre of Castile!—but how is it that you are here? and why do I see you in this dress?

and for what sin is it, that you perform so troublesome a penance?"

"Alas!" returned Isabel, "I will not deny the pleasure it affords me to see you again; but nevertheless, I must look upon this meeting in the light of a misfortune. I am at this moment performing a penance enjoined upon your account,—and to meet, and converse with you again,—and within the cathedral, * will be looked upon almost as a deadly sin, and worthy of a severer penalty; which indeed I am not unwilling to endure, thus to have seen you once more,—though God knows how wholly bent I now am, upon fulfilling the duties of an obedient and a virtuous wife."

I was secretly not greatly displeased to learn that Isabel was restored to her husband; for

* In most of the Spanish cathedrals it is forbidden, under a severe penalty, for any man to speak to a woman.

although I felt the most lively satisfaction in again meeting with her who had so singularly shared with me the ups and downs of life, I felt no great disposition to fulfil the promise which I had made upon the sea-shore when we last parted; and I now endeavoured to convince her, that she was in no way to blame for the present accidental meeting; and could not on that account, be subjected to any penance: "but now," said I, "since there is no doubt that we must pass the night in the cathedral, there seems to be no necessity for passing it beside this pillar: let us enter the choir, where we may occupy two of the canons' seats till morning; this candle, burning before St. Jude, is fortunately not extinct like most of the others, and with it we can light two or three of the tapers within the choir."

Leaving St. Jude accordingly in the dark,—to make amends for which, Isabel said an ave and

a paternoster at his altar, she followed me into the choir; where, having lighted a few of the tapers, we seated ourselves in two of the canons' chairs.

“ Now, Isabel,” said I, “ as we are here settled for the night, “ let me hear all that has happened to thee since we last parted; and how I am thus doomed to be for ever the cause of thy misfortunes.” And she, without further preface than saying that her story would be very brief, gave me the following relation.

“ When I parted from you on the sea-shore, and found myself crossing the open country, and the morning sun beaming upon my face, I could not but feel the utmost joy at my deliverance from that gloomy tower, where for so long a time I had never been cheered by the full light of day—and although I was separated from you, and alone, the feeling of being at liberty, and

restored to the world, gave me strength and courage to continue my journey ; and meeting before noon a train of mules travelling towards Ronda, I bargained with the muleteer, to carry me thither ; and when I reached Ronda, the purse which you bestowed upon me, enabled me to hire a *tartana*, to carry me all the way to my native town.

“ You will readily believe, that as I approached the spot where I had been torn from my husband, I felt no small anxiety as to the reception I was likely to receive. He had no doubt learned, that I had been condemned to perpetual imprisonment in the tower of Tarifa ; and however great the affection which he entertained for me, it was unreasonable in me to expect, that when his wife was separated from him for ever, he would continue so faithful to her memory as to enter into no new engage-

ments, or that he might not even apply to the Pope for a dissolution of his marriage, as indeed we doubted not in the tower of Tarifa that he had done. Hoping the best, however, I reached my husband's house, who, it may well be believed, was at first inclined to think that he saw the ghost of his late wife; which indeed was the less to be wondered at, since the rigours of a long confinement had left but few traces of those attractions which my features had once possessed in his eyes.

“I recounted to him without any disguise, the history of all that had taken place,—our extraordinary meeting; and no less wonderful escape; and though he confessed he would have preferred, if my escape could have been accomplished without a renewal of my intimacy with you, yet as that could not have been, he expressed the utmost satisfaction that I was

restored to him upon any terms. My heart however told me, that I was not worthy of this kindness,—and that before enjoying the matrimonial happiness that was offered to me, some expiation of my past offences was necessary. To my confessor, I disclosed the events that troubled me, and required that he would enjoin upon me some penance that might entitle me to perfect peace of mind; and the penance he enjoined, was no less than to cut off my hair (here Isabel drew her hood more around her face), and to wear this unbecoming habit for four weeks; to walk on foot to the metropolitan church of Spain, subsisting upon charity; and to make the circuit of the cathedral twice every day upon my knees, during four weeks more,—saying a paternoster and an ave, at the shrine of every saint. I confess it was with reluctance that I performed the first part of the penance,—for

your commendation had made me proud of my tresses; and to throw aside my mantilla and veil (which, although the gift of the monster Andrades, were not outdone by any in Andalusia), for this hideous habit, you will allow, was a sacrifice that might have expiated offences heavier than mine. The whole of my penance is this day completed: and to-morrow, I set out for Andalusia, to return to my husband, who, I know, will receive me with affection.

“ Mine has been a sadly chequered life since Andrades first cast his eyes upon me: but for your interference, I might have remained for ever in his power, and died of ill-usage and chagrin,—and yet, your deliverance from him sent me to the tower of Tarifa; but for you, I might there have lived and died,—and yet your interference in my favour, has sent me here to perform penance, and has cost me my tresses.”

“Console yourself for that misfortune, Isabel,” said I: “time will remedy it.”

“But time,” replied she, “will also make me indifferent to the remedy:” but, continued she, “now that I have given you my brief relation, indulge me with your own history since we parted,—and begin from the moment that we separated on the sea-shore;” and so I, in my turn, gave to Isabel the narration with which the reader is already acquainted,—only leaving out the confession of the smuggler Paulo, and a part of the story of Gaston the one-eyed; and concluding by assuring her, that my character was materially amended since I had first met with her; for that my various accessions of fortune had given me a higher idea of my own consequence and respectability; and that I had come to a determination to support the character of an honourable Caballero,—and that it was

finally my intention, after having seen the metropolis, to settle in life, and make choice of a discreet and virtuous partner.

I thought when I made this announcement, that I heard Isabel sigh,—but this, I trust was fancy; and that the penance she had so laboriously, and at so great sacrifices accomplished, had weaned her from all old recollections, and prepared her for the society of a husband, who by her own account, was the best and most indulgent of men. And in this, and other conversation—in which however I did not allow one particle of gallantry to mingle—the night slipped away; and a faint, speckled gleam was seen to fall through the painted windows upon the upper part of the pillars.

“ We must now separate for the present, Isabel,” said I. “ The cathedral doors will soon be opened; and if we should be discovered, who

knows what suspicions might be excited,—not only might the discovery, with however little reason, subject you to a new penance; but me, to another imprisonment; for so great are the riches contained in this cathedral, that concealment in it during the night, might naturally create doubts of our honest intentions:” and we accordingly extinguished the tapers, and left the choir, to wait, behind separate pillars, the opening of the gate, and an opportunity to leave the church without observation. But, for a reason to be immediately explained, I exacted from Isabel a promise, to meet me on the bridge below the Alcazar, two hours after day-break, at which time she purposed setting out on her return to Andalusia.

The reader will recollect, that when I delivered Isabel at Seville from the tyranny of her husband, she presented me with a casket of

jewels, which Andrades had given to her, and which I disposed of at a fair price in the city of Malaga. Now, although I never questioned the title I had to the inheritance of Andrades' gold, to which I had without doubt a better right than any other person,—I had not felt such perfect confidence in my title to the jewels which Isabel gave to me. A gift may doubtless be retained without dishonesty; but of late, I had begun to regard honesty and honour, as two separate things; and to make this distinction, that although that which is honourable, is always honest,—yet that which is strictly honest, may not be altogether honourable. In short, that a needy adventurer, in being honest, does not do amiss,—but that a Caballero, with a heavy purse, and an honourable name, must be content with nothing less than honour,—and therefore, I had come to the resolution while seated in the

canon's chair in the cathedral, to restore to Isabel the price which I had received for her jewels: and for this reason, I engaged her to meet me upon the bridge of Toledo.

The same feeling would have led me to make restitution of the two purses which I received from the two rival artists; for though I had nothing to reproach myself with, on the score of having duped them,—however unfortunately the affair had turned out,—and although I looked upon the five hundred pieces of eight to have been fairly earned, for the service performed to my unlucky friend Ramirez, notwithstanding the misfortune that afterwards befel him,—I felt no satisfaction in having accepted the paltry rewards of the two duped artists: and I say, I would willingly have restored these purses to their owners, had this been possible; but one of them, I had myself rendered incapable of ever

in this word benefiting by the restitution, and there would have been small wisdom in endeavouring to find out the other.

Soon after Isabel and myself had taken our stations behind the pillars, the cathedral doors were opened; and without attracting observation, except perhaps as an early worshipper, I left the church, and made the best of my way to the posada; where, taking out of my store the hundred and fifty pieces which I had received for the jewels, I stationed myself upon the bridge, to wait the arrival of the fair penitent, who was soon afterwards seen to approach.

Isabel at first refused to receive what she had presented as a gift; but when I represented to her, that by converting the jewels into money, it was no longer a casket of jewels, but a purse of gold, for which I was her debtor, she no longer refused the purse which I put into her

hand; and it fortunately happening at that moment, that a coach and seven mules came out of Toledo on its return to Cordova—from which place it had brought the Duque de Salté dor—I prevailed upon Isabel to take advantage of it; assuring her, that the penance enjoined did not include her return to Andalusia. I assisted Isabel into the coach—affectionately pressed her hand—recommended her to the protection⁷ of heaven—and of the muleteer, who vaulting into his seat, and crying “*Arre Colonel,*” set his mules into a gallop; and it was thus that I parted from Isabel,—and never saw her more.

CHAPTER XXVII.

WHICH, MORE THAN ANY OTHER CHAPTER IN THIS BOOK, MAY BE CALLED “MULTUM IN PARVO:” AND FROM THE PERUSAL OF WHICH, THE READER WILL UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SINS AND PECCADILLOS.

RETURNING from my parting interview with Isabel, to the city, and ascending the steep path that leads from the bridge to the Plaza Real, my attention was attracted by a crowd of persons collected in front of the gate of the Dominican convent, upon which was affixed a paper, which all were reading, or endeavouring to read. It was the publication of an indulgence of no fewer than five hundred days, to all such per-

sons as being secretly conscious of any sin should appear the following day in the character and dress of penitents, at the execution of two robbers, which was then to take place.* This was an indulgence not difficult to purchase ; for with the long cloak and mask of the penitent, the penance might be as secret as the sin—and many blessings were accordingly showered upon the head of the considerate archbishop, who had by the publication of this indulgence, helped so many on their way to heaven. And in another way besides disguise, the reputation of the penitent was secured. No fewer than five hundred cloaks, masks, caps, and wands, were provided

* The unfortunate felon was accompanied by upwards of two thousand masked penitents, who looked more like a train of devils than human beings. A black cloak entirely enveloped the body and head, holes only being left for the eyes and mouth ; a black pyramidal cap, at least eighteen inches high, crowned the head ; and each carried in his hand a long white wand.—*Execution at Barcellona. Spain in 1830.*

by the archbishop for the use of penitents; so indifferent an opinion did the archbishop entertain of the morality of the city of Toledo,—and it was moreover made known, that these were to be deposited on the previous night,¹ in the great vaults that lie underneath the Alcazar, in order that such penitent sinners as resolved to take advantage of the opportunity, might avoid the calumny of issuing from their own doors, dressed in the penitential garb.

Now although, in a sort of debtor and creditor account, which it will be recollected I had but lately cast up in my own mind, I found the balance of benefits and misdeeds to be somewhat in my own favour; yet I could not conceal from myself, that a better Catholic than I was, might stand in need of the archbishop's offer. Anticipating some increase of temptations in the metropolis, to which I was hastening, I

thought it might be as well to provide against the consequence of them; and to tell the truth, the conversation of the good friar from whom I had but just parted company, had not altogether failed in its effect upon me; and moved partly by these considerations, though not altogether without some instigation from the love of frolic, I resolved to join the band of penitents, and to delay another day my journey towards the capital.

Issuing from the posada soon after sunrise, and taking a circuitous road through the tortuous streets of the city, and so gaining the outskirts, I found myself below the Alcazar; and a narrow path leading up from the river, carried me to the archway of the great vaults, into which I accordingly entered. My zeal had been more tardy than that of most of my brethren; for I found that almost every one of

the five hundred cloaks and masks had already found owners; and in truth, it seemed as if there were even more secret sinners in the city of Toledo than the archbishop had provided for. Hastily appropriating one of the few unoccupied garbs, I joined the ranks of the penitents, and soon after fell into the procession. The good friar, who had been for some days the companion of my journey, and who had acquired additional sanctity in the eyes of the people by the holy pilgrimage from which he had just returned, presided over the religious services; and when he had secured the entrance of the culprit into Paradise, he addressed the bystanders,—not omitting the penitents,—telling them, that if their garb were not the symbol of inward penitence, it was of little avail; and for my part, I could not help entertaining some doubts as to the efficacy of my own profession.

The penance, if such it deserved to be called, being ended, I, and my four hundred and ninety-nine fellow penitents, retraced our steps to the Alcazar, with the design of dropping our disguise, and depositing our cloaks, caps, masks, and wands where we had found them. The vaults of the Alcazar are roomy enough, and dark enough, for more than twice five hundred to disrobe themselves, without any one seeing his neighbour's face,—and but a little time had elapsed, before the greater number of the penitents might have been saints or sinners for ought that could be discovered; and had left the vaults, and their cloaks behind them, and I may charitably hope, some part of their sins. The number gradually lessened,—and at length there were not more than ten or twelve left, still in disguise, who seemed in no haste to drop it,—and who crowded around a blazing fire, which some good

Catholic had lighted, and which diffused at the same time a pleasant warmth through the chill air of these subterraneous places, and threw a bright red flare upon their massive walls and vaulted roof. Some large pieces of wood, some large stones, and some old wine-skins, lay scattered here and there; and one by one, all seated themselves around the fire—a singular-looking company, as may easily be imagined; all in black cloaks, high caps, masks, and holding their white wands in their hands. While seated in the circle—for I was myself one of the number—I could not help indulging some curiosity to know what kind of faces and figures might be concealed by these solemn dresses; and still more, what those causes might be, that brought the company together, and that had prompted each to assume the garb of penitence.

“ Señores,” said I, after having thrown a quantity of dry branches upon the fire, which threw up a flame almost to the roof,—and breaking the silence which had continued for some time, “ we have been all alike engaged in the performance of a pious duty which is now finished, and which I trust has been as beneficial to you, as I feel it has been to me. This duty, however, has left our bodily wants but ill provided for; and I entertain little doubt that there are some amongst us, who could find the way to their mouths notwithstanding their masks, if a puchero were set before them: for my part, I confess this would be a matter of no difficulty to me; and as we have reason rather to be merry than sad, that so handsome an acquittance as five hundred days has been granted us, I propose with your leave señores, that while this good fire lasts, we throw aside

our penitent's garb, and discuss a puchero, which you will allow me the honour of providing."

"Worthy sir," replied one of the masks, nothing can be more liberal or reasonable than your proposal: and if to your offer of a puchero, you were to add a wine-skin of Val de Peñas, nothing could be more seasonable. There is fortunately a posada at no great distance, and if you will permit me to be the bearer of your pesetas, I shall quickly return with the materials of the feast,—what say ye, señores?" added he. "Let those who are willing to partake of a puchero at the expense of this Caballero, throw aside their cloaks and masks :" and at the same time, the speaker removed his own; and the next moment the fire blazed upon a group of as merry round faces as were ever assembled in the kitchen of a venta,—with two or three exceptions indeed, to be afterwards noticed. It

was not many minutes before the puchero appeared, and was placed in the midst of the circle, and I am mistaken if some of the five hundred days which had been gained by the penance, were not subtracted on the score of gluttony.

“ Now, señores,” said I, when every one had wiped his knife and clasped it, “ we cannot yet think of separating,—the wine-skin is yet tolerably corpulent, and the fire blazes brighter than ever. Let us give each other our confidence; and beginning with whosoever may incline to take the lead, tell what brought us hither.”

“ For my part,” said he who had first thrown aside his mask, “ I like the proposal almost as well as the puchero and the wine-skin; and if all the peccadillos of this worthy company be as venial as mine, we shall find more to laugh at than to cry over. With your leave, señores, I

will set the example ;”—and no one of the group offering any opposition to the proposal, the last speaker, taking a draught from the wine-skin and handing it to his neighbour, said,

“ In my better days, I had the honour to fill the office of one of the under cooks, in the archbishop’s kitchen ; and during the time that I remained in that employment, I was daily guilty of the sin of covetousness : every stew, or pastry that was destined for his highness’ stomach, I coveted for my own ; but so narrowly did the head cook watch after his perquisites, that not one morsel of such dainties ever found its way into my mouth. At length, however, the desire to taste the meats that were served at the archbishop’s table grew so violent, that I resolved to indulge it, come what might ; and it so chanced, that a rare accident aided my design, as you shall presently hear.

“ The archbishop ordered a great feast to be prepared, for many high dignitaries of the church —bishops, canons, and prebendaries ; some, of Toledo,—some from Madrid,—some from Talavera,—and some, from even more distant places ; and among others the bishop of Jaen, who had been lately promoted to that see from some dignity which he had held in one of the Southern provinces. It so fell out, however, that the bishop of Jaen fell sick ; and on the night before that upon which the feast was to take place, a messenger arrived at the archbishop’s gate, bringing his highness’ excuses. As good luck would have it, I had that night taken the place of the porter, who had some little affair of gallantry on hand ; and I immediately saw how the tidings I had received could be turned to my profit. His grace the archbishop had never seen the most part of the guests he had invited ;

and the bishop of Jaen in particular, was as little known to the archbishop, as I was to the bishop of Jaen ; or I may say, as I was to my master the archbishop. Nothing therefore could be easier than to secure for my own stomach, the share of the dainties meant for that of the bishop. What a prospect was this ! not merely a sly spoonful, or the scrapings of a dish,—but the choice and abundance that would naturally fall to the share of a bishop. In fine, gentlemen, I carried my project into effect. My master the archbishop had once filled a lower office, and I took care to borrow for the occasion his bishop's cast-off robes. Never before did I assist in the preparation of dainties with so great zeal ; and never did they smell so savoury. Leaving my duties unfinished, I slipt to my garret,—robed myself as a bishop, hastened down by a back way, and entered the gate at

the same time that some of the other dignitaries descended from their coaches ; so that no one could tell who had stepped out. All gave way to the bishop ; and as bishop of Jaen, I sat down in the chief seat, to partake of the dainties I had helped to cook.

“ ‘ I am charmed,’ said the archbishop, ‘ that my poor fare finds favour with your highness :’ and so the archbishop might well say, — and well might the canons and the prebendaries congratulate each other, as I have no doubt they did, upon the excellent example set them by so great a dignitary as the bishop of Jaen. The after events of my life, gentlemen, have no relation to the penance I have been now performing ; it is on account of the trick played upon the archbishop my master, and the impiety of an under-cook personating a dignitary of the church, that I joined the penitents this

day, and now find myself among this worthy company."

"It will be well for us all," said I, as the speaker finished his relation, "if no more deadly sin than thine, has brought us hither."

"Now," continued he, turning to his neighbour, "it falls to thy turn next, to give an account of thy misdeeds."

"My sin," replied he whose turn it was to speak, "is even more venial than that by which this company have just been entertained. I am serving-man to a Caballero of this city,—as poor as a rat, and as proud as a peacock; and my sin lies in making the world believe he is as rich as a canon, and no prouder than he has a right to be. 'Señores,' say I, in a crowd, 'please to make way for the Conde'—though he is no more a Conde than I am: or at market, when they importune me to buy melons, or

pomegranates—‘Excuse me,’ I say, ‘the melons consumed at the table of my master the Conde, are from his highness’ estate in the Vega of Granada;’ or, ‘My master the Conde, is not partial to pomegranates; all he receives from his estate at Cordova, he presents to his Majesty.’”

In this way, I turn my master’s grandeur to my own account: and in helping him to a reputation, some pesetas find their way into my pocket—not from my master’s stores—God help them and make them fuller—but from such señoritas as think it something to have so great and wealthy a Caballero as my master for a cortejo; and sometimes too, from the convents, who think a duro not ill-bestowed in securing my interest with my master, that mass in this or that convent, or that this or that procession, may be graced by the presence of so considerable a personage as the Conde, from whom they doubtless

expect some rich bequest. It is true, that the half of such compliments are the perquisite of my master, who, from the regularity with which he attends mass, and mixes in the religious processions, is accounted one of the most devout caballeros in all Toledo; nevertheless, the remaining half is not unworthy the acceptance of one who has the misfortune to serve so poor a caballero as my master. This, gentlemen, is the amount of my crime; and I dare say you will agree with me in thinking, that it is of so excusable a character, that the penance of this day has not only cancelled all that is past, but will stand as a quittance for whatever future score may be run up. ‘And now, señor,’ said he, turning to his neighbour, ‘we wait to hear what thou hast to say.’”

“For my part,” said the next speaker, “I can scarcely agree with the caballeros who have

last spoken, in looking upon their crimes as venial: one profaned the robes of a bishop, and so put a slight upon the holy Catholic church; and the other went to mass with his master for the sake of pocketing half a duro. Compared with such irreligious acts, my sin is truly venial. I am from Cordova, gentlemen; arrived in this city yesterday with a train of mules; and my reason of being one of the present company is this:—Passing through Andujar, we stopped a night in the posada. The daughter of the posadero is my *maja* (sweetheart, in Andalusian dialect). After supper, I spread my mattress beside that of another muleteer—a townsman. I had not fallen asleep, when I saw him rise; I suspected something amiss, and followed him; he tapped at a window shutter,—and soon out jumped the faithless Joanna,—‘*Ah! mi querida!*—*Ah! cielo mio!*’ said he; but I stopped

his mouth,—I stuck my knife in him. This is the extent of my sin; and the priest to whom I confessed, having enjoined a penance, I have taken advantage of the present indulgence:—and so I say, like those who spoke before me, may all your sins, señores, be as light as mine.”

“As for my guilt,” said he, whose turn it was to speak the next; “an indulgence of five, in place of five hundred days, would be a receipt in full. My skill in the use of the guitar is unrivalled in this city; nor am I an indifferent hand at a *canto amoroso*; and it is by making the best of these accomplishments, that I have subjected myself to a moderate penance. I am an accomplice in every love affair in Toledo. Without my assistance, the caballeros might wait from vespers to matins, without even so much as seeing a veil thrown aside, or picking

up a love-billet; and the señoras and señoritas might have hearts as hard as pebble stones. As for the husbands and dueñas, they wish me and my guitar at the devil; for in this city we are looked upon as inseparable. I never throw my cloak over my shoulders without slipping my guitar under it; even this day I carried it under my penitent's garment, and here you perceive it is; perhaps, señores, a specimen of my skill might not be unacceptable; and if I mistake not, the caballero who has been the cause of our merriment, may chance to have need of my services:" and the company appearing to relish the proposal, the accomplice of the serenade seized his guitar, and sung to an old Arragonese air, the following couplets:—

“ Excuse me, that my rude guitar
Thy tranquil sleep should break ;
Or, that my timid song should say—
Wake, Leonor, awake !

“ Open thy casement, Leonor ;
Fear not the envious star ;
But lift thy veil, and show the night
Eyes that are brighter far :

“ Hush ! hush my song !—she comes ! Ah, no !
She heeds nor song, nor sigh ;
Cruel Leonor,—no sound I hear
But the Tagus flowing by.”

Every one complimented the execution and manner of the singer. “ But friend,” said I, “ if so be that I had stood in need of an accomplice, in order to gain the favour of a señora, the specimen thou hast given would scarcely recommend thy services; for it appears that Leonor paid no manner of attention to thy serenade.”

“ Take my word for it,” replied the musician, “ that the last word would scarcely be out of my mouth, before the casement would be opened,

and Leonor would step out upon the balcony: make trial of my skill, señor, and I 'll engage we shall not be fooled out of our time."

" More unlikely things have come to pass," said I; " but come,—let the story go round,—we wait the pleasure of him whose turn it is next to speak,—to whom the worthy company will doubtless listen with attention; for by the tonsure, I perceive that we have the honour to number amongst us, one of the servants of the church;" and he, making an inclination of the head, to the company round, spoke in this manner.—" It is a lamentable thing, señores, when a *cura*, as I am, should feel so heavy a burden of sin, as forces him to undergo the penance which we have this day offered together,—and it is also a misfortune, when the temptation of a *puchero* is so great, as to force a *cura* to expose his sins and his wants in the

presence of this company. Yet, such is unfortunately my condition. Thirty years ago, señores, more than two hundred houses were counted in my *paroquia*; and at this day, twelve is all the number. Once, my revenues amounted to six hundred crowns,—and forty crowns are all that now repay my duties: forty crowns will scarcely buy a daily crust of bread, with the rubbing of an onion; and yet for ten long years, the cura of the *parochial* of *San Estaban* has fared no better. This may, perhaps, be some palliation, though it cannot be pleaded as an excuse for the sin that has placed me amongst you,—the nature of which you shall presently hear.

“ Don Felipe de Ragadanza was twenty years one of my congregation. Never during all that time, did that good Catholic omit daily mass, and weekly confession; never did a procession

issue from a convent in Toledo, that Don Felipe did not carry a candle in it; and never in all that time did he ever profane Tuesdays and Fridays, or the holy season of Lent, by any indulgence forbidden by the church. A year ago, Don Felipe fell sick,—and feeling that he was about to die, I was called in haste to his bed-side.

“ ‘Reverend father,’ said Don Felipe, ‘my race in this world is run, and I would fain secure a speedy entrance into Paradise: tell me, without disguise, what number of masses are needful to free my soul from purgatory; and before I lose the power of doing what I please with my own, I will count into your hand whatever sum be exacted for the purchase of them.’

“ Now, in my own evil heart, I well knew, that if Don Felipe did not obtain an immediate entrance into Paradise, no one ever could hope

for that blessing; and that fifty-two masses,—one for every week in the year,—would have abundantly secured all that he stood in need of: but my crust of bread and rubbing of onion just at that moment coming to my recollection, ‘Don Felipe,’ said I, ‘I will answer as a conscientious servant of the church is in duty bound to answer:—It is true that few have been more exact in their religious observances than you, señor; and few more devout; and some would say,—Die in peace, Don Felipe, so good a Catholic has nothing to fear:—but as for any thing that we know to the contrary, one day in purgatory may be equal to a thousand years in this world, my opinion is—that it is wisest to make sure; and that three hundred and sixty-five masses are not too many, even for those who have seemingly the smallest need of them: with that number, señor de Ragadanza, I can

take upon me to ensure an immediate entrance into Paradise. Upon this, Don Felipe counted out one hundred and eighty-three duros, which is at the rate of half a duro for each mass, and one over; and soon after, the worthy caballero breathed his last.

“ That very day I said mass, and ate a puchero; and so I continued to do every one of the three hundred and sixty-four days that followed. It is now three weeks since the masses and the duros came to a conclusion; and since the puchero has given place to the crust of bread and the rubbing of an onion; and when I came to consider, señores, that I had eaten three hundred and sixty-five pucheros, by saying mass to deliver from purgatory a soul that had never been in it, it will cause you little surprise that with a sin of so great enormity on my conscience, I should embrace the opportunity

offered by the good archbishop, of bettering my condition hereafter. This, señores, is the history of my penitence, and I would it were in my power to say, with as great truth as some of you have said, that I wish all your crimes were as venial as mine."

" It appears to me, reverend cura," said I, " that the sin hangs heavier on thy conscience than it need do; for my part, when I think of the crust of bread, and rubbing of onion, I am almost tempted to wish that thy conscience had more of such sins to answer."

" Ah, heaven forbid; Maria Santa Purisima forbid!" said the cura.

" I," said the next speaker, with somewhat of an important air, " have the honour to fill the post of hangman in this city,—do not be alarmed, señores, I am not here in my official capacity; and the cause why the ceremony of

this day has been performed by deputy, and that I have been a spectator of it in the penitent's garb, will soon be told. It is one month this day, since a rogue was sentenced to be hanged for sacrilege. This rogue's brother was an *escrivano* in this city, and they were as like to each other as one melon is to another. This *escrivano* I bore a grudge against, for the ingenuity with which on many occasions he had saved the lives of rogues, and cheated me of my perquisites; and on that account I resolved to serve him a trick in return."

" 'Harkee,' said I to the rogue who was to be hanged, 'whether would you like that you or your brother should mount the gallows?'

" 'A fool art thou to ask the question,' said he.

" 'Not such a fool, neither,' said I; 'but answer my question.'

“ ‘ If all Toledo had one neck,’ said he, ‘ I would rather you twisted it, than mine.’

“ ‘ Rightly answered,’ said I. ‘ When thy brother comes to visit thee to-night, and to tell thee, as he no doubt will, that he has no pesetas to buy thee off, give him the slip while I hold the door open ; make the best of thy way, and I ’ll close it fast enough on him ; and the execution will go on all the same.’

“ And so we contrived it, and managed it too. Nobody knew of the trick, but the escrivano who was hanged, and he who hanged him,—that is myself, señores. All his protestations were useless ; for being as like to his brother as one hempen rope is to another, nobody gave credit to him ; and so I had my frolic. For my part, I see no great harm that was done ; but my confessor having enjoined a penance, the archbishop’s indulgence suited me to a tittle : for at

the same time that it cleared off my score, it gave my nephew an opportunity of trying his hand in the business in which I design him to succeed me,—and this, señores, is all I have to say.”

“ If the escrivanos of Toledo,” said I, “ be like the escrivanos in other parts of Spain, thou may’st be held excusable; and as for the rogue who escaped, he ’ll no doubt one day or other give thee an opportunity of making amends to the law. Let the story go round. Come, señor, take up the speech.”

“ Alas !” said he whose turn it was to speak the next, “ happy are those whose crimes are so venial as to have been atoned by the penitence of this day. As for my sin, I greatly fear that the five hundred days, which to others have almost opened the gates of heaven, will scarcely be felt by me as any mitigation of my penalty.

This, señores, is the crime that has brought me hither:—I am a vender of fruits and vegetables, which I rear in a garden of my own on the bank of the Tagus; and every morning I take my place in the *Plaza Real*, and lay out my fruit and vegetables. I have no reason to tell you, señores, that every morning a friar from each of the five convents of Franciscans, and from each of the four convents of Capuchins, and from the two convents of Augustins, walks through the market-place, and asks supplies for his convent for the love of God. One gives a cabbage, another tomata, a third garbauzos, a fourth a melon, a fifth grapes; and every one picks the best for the use of the convent, knowing well the blessing that will return to the giver: but as for me, before I take my place in the market, I carefully examine my fruits and vegetables; not that I may pick out the best for the con-

vents, but that I may lay aside for the friars whatever worm-eaten cabbages, or useless melons, or shrivelled grapes, I can find in my baskets. Never, during fifteen years that I have sat in the market-place of Toledo, have the convents been one *real* the better for me; and yet no one of all the market people that own a stall there, enjoys so high a reputation as I do. ‘Ah! the good Pascual,’ says one, ‘he never forgets to toss a cabbage into the friar’s sack.’ ‘The devout Pascual,’ says another, ‘his gift is always ready.’ ‘A true friend to the convents, is Pascual,’ says a third. ‘Many’s the *doblon* he has given away in choice melons to feed the monks.’ A sad score, señores, I have run up against me; and no wonder it hangs heavy upon my mind, and that the offer of the archbishop was not thrown away upon me; and such, señores, is the history of my penitence.”

“Thou say’st truly indeed,” said I, “that thy guilt is of no ordinary kind,—but it seems to me, that thou hast a remedy at hand; ’tis but tossing into the friars’ sack in time to come, two good melons in place of one bad one,—and three fresh, instead of one worm-eaten cabbage: if thou hast the good fortune to live long enough, thou may’st easily repair thy error.”

“Nevertheless,” replied the fruit vender, “death might cut short so tardy a way of reparation; and an indulgence of five hundred days, small though the number be, is not to be neglected.” But I could easily perceive, that the bestower of worthless melons, and worm-eaten cabbages, judged it more agreeable to put on a penitent’s gown and mask, than to bestow upon the Franciscans and Capuchins that which might possibly tempt a *real* from the pocket of a canon or a prebendary.

“ For my part,” said the next in turn, “ this day’s penitence has taken a sore weight off my conscience ; as you shall hear. One morning, ten months ago, I robbed and murdered a merchant of Valencia, travelling homeward, about half a league from this city. The *escrivano* bought me off, and some of the merchant’s gold purchased absolution ; but as a good Catholic, I was bound to throw a stone upon the cross erected by the way-side, whensoever I might chance to pass that way, since as you well know, señores, every stone thrown on the cross of a murdered man, is as good as a day taken from purgatory ;* and I having sent him there,

* Walking in the neighbourhood of the city, on the road, or rather track, across the Toledo mountains, I observed two university students, seventeen or eighteen years of age, busily employed in collecting stones, and laying them upon a cross erected by the way-side in commemoration of a murder ; and with each stone muttering a prayer. I did not at that time understand the meaning of this strange occupation ; but I afterwards learned, that in virtue of

without absolution, was the more bound to act a Christian-like part towards his soul. Three times I have passed the cross, without performing this pious duty: once having been earnestly occupied in pursuing a caballero who had just left Toledo with a heavy store of pistoles in his girdle; and on the other occasion, returning in haste from a little affair of the same kind that had engaged me over night. These omissions, señores, lay heavily on my conscience, for I am regular at mass and confession, and never omit the performance of any religious duty; but the penance of this day must doubtless have atoned for my neglect,—and such is the cause of my appearance amongst you.”

some ancient Papal authority, a certain indulgence is granted for every stone laid on the cross of a murdered man, if accompanied by a prayer, and that these prayers shorten the period of his purgatorial trial. In other parts of Spain, I have seen crosses broken with the weight of stones which had been laid upon them.—*Spain in 1830.*

“ ’T is no doubt a weighty cause, señor,” said I; “ and the merchant of Valencia was a fortunate man to be sent out of the world by so conscientious a Catholic as you seem to be, in place of by some irreverend rogue, who might never have thought more of the merchant’s soul and its needs.”

“ Truly spoken,” replied he. “ I have never failed to perform this pious act towards any one; and it is not only once, or twice either, that some doublons from the purses I have made my own, have gone towards the purchase of masses for the souls of those who were their owners:—ah, Maria Santa purisima ! defend me from impiety.”

“ Now, señor,” said I, to him whose turn was next come—a caballero seemingly of tender years, and who, when he had thrown aside the penitent’s cloak, had retired from the circle, and

still sat wrapped up in the ample folds of such a cloak as a person of consideration might own—
“ we wait your pleasure.”

“ Señores,” said the caballero, in a lower and somewhat less harsh voice than those who had already spoken; “ I know not in what terms to reply to the wish expressed by this company, but which, being here amongst you, and having partaken of your confidence, I know it is my duty to obey. There are female, as well as male penitents, señores, and in me you see one of the former class.”

At this announcement every one of the company uncovered, and made an obeisance to the speaker.

“ Please, señores,” continued she, “ reserve your gallantry for a more fitting opportunity. It is much contrary to my inclination, that I find myself in this circle. Being anxious to

avoid discovery, I delayed quitting this place till all here should have left it; but this intention being frustrated by the proposal of the caballero, who appears to be master of the ceremonies, I was constrained to seat myself here, and having listened to all that has been related, I cannot well object to relate in my turn, the reason of my penitence.

“ It is not, señores, on account of any particular or flagrant sin, that I have subjected myself to this humiliation; such sins are committed only by your sex; as for ours, they are of a more venial character. I was bred from childhood in the royal seminary, and there continued to live, until the age of seventeen, when a caballero of good figure, and in the enjoyment of a lucrative post, cast his eyes upon me, and demanded me of the archbishop in marriage. For my part, I felt no great

disinclination to that condition; for the strictness of the *seminario* had prevented even those little innocent gallantries which are allowed to señoritas; and I willingly listened to the cabalero, and became his wife.

“ You will not suppose, señores, that I am about to make a confession of any little infidelities with which I may have to accuse myself: I would scarcely think of putting on a penitent’s garb on their account. The cause of my joining in the procession of this day is the inclination which I feel to attract notice, and the arts which I daily practise to secure admiration, even from those who ought to have no eyes for the charms of women. If I go to the Paseo, or have occasion to cross the Plaza Real, in place of drawing my mantilla closer, and throwing my veil over my face when I perceive a priest or prebendary approach, or when I

pass a bench full of friars,—which it would be my duty to do, knowing my own charms, and the besetting sin of your sex,—I am unable to prevail with myself to act thus considerately; but cannot deny myself the gratification my vanity receives, when, feigning to be unable to lower my veil in sufficient time, I cast down my eyes, and am conscious of the admiration which a glance of my countenance has excited. This, señores, is a sin I am daily guilty of, and which no doubt demands a penance. Even at mass I throw as much grace into my figure as I am mistress of; and my eyes may sometimes be seen above my fan; and when I kneel on my balcony, when processions pass by, I am not able to forget my own attractions. Such, señores, is the cause of my penitence; and now that I have given you my confidence, I pray you to excuse me from longer

remaining with you, having some reasons for desiring to be at home :" and the lady, accordingly, making a polite inclination to the company, and allowing her eyes to glance a moment towards the spot whence I was seated, drew her cloak closer around her, and left the circle.

“ A charming lady ! una señora completa,” said the master of the Guitar, addressing his speech to me ; “ I could venture to pilot a caballero like yourself underneath her balcony.”

“ Señores,” said the next in order,—an oldish fellow, the insufficiency of whose nether garments was visible enough through the loop-holes of the threadbare brown cloak that was wrapt round him, and who had done extraordinary justice to the merits of the puchero, “ I perceive it has come to my turn to speak the next. The cravings of a poor fellow who has made his meals for a week past upon the scrapings of the

market, will be accepted as an apology by this worthy company for the liberties taken with the good cheer that the generous caballero has provided. But, señores, I humbly beg you will pass over so insignificant a sinner as I am, since in good truth I have nothing to tell wherewith to tickle the ears of this company."

"Worthy friend," said I, "each of us has related in his turn, the peccadillo that has led him hither; and the reason which thou hast given, is small ground for thy exemption; and however insignificant thy tale may appear to thee, there is little doubt that it will afford gratification to this company; for every ear is not tickled by the same relation. As for the puchero, friend, thou art heartily welcome to the gratification it has given thee, and no apology is required: but if it had never crossed thy lips, we should nevertheless look for thy

story, since thou hast listened to those of thy neighbours."

"Most excellent caballero, and worthy señores," replied the other, "if I had to relate my own peccadillos, my story would not be devoid of interest, or unworthy of your attention; but it is not my own sins, but those of another, that have brought me hither. What those sins may be, I am utterly ignorant; but he who owns them is one of so mighty a rank, that to divulge his name, or tell even the little that I know, would be the sure ruin of so insignificant and unprotected a person as I am."

"Friend," said I in reply—for the reserve of this poor fellow had not only inflamed my curiosity, but partly even conciliated my esteem, "what thou sayest, is no doubt true; but whatever may be the station of him of whom thou hast spoken, I engage that thou shalt not suffer

by his ill-humour ; and moreover, that thou shalt eat a puchero every day for a week to come. Pray then hasten to indulge us ; for I perceive by the faces of this worthy company, that every one is as curious as I am to learn how one should have come hither as a penitent, and yet not on account of his own sins : ” and he who was thus called upon, bowing to the company, and without farther hesitation, spoke in this manner.

“ I was sitting yesterday, señores, upon the steps of the archbishop’s palace, digging my teeth into a thick melon-skin, that I had picked up near the gate of the Dominicans, when his reverence swept by, entering his own door from the cathedral ; and I, as in duty bound, rose, and at the same time begged his blessing upon an old man, who seldom knew what it was to have his belly full. This I said boldly to the

archbishop, looking in his reverence's face, and allowing my eye to wander significantly downwards, over the lordly paunch, which you all know, señores, to be the most capacious in Toledo. 'Follow me,' said the archbishop; and I, not knowing whether his reverence was about to send me with a line of recommendation to his cook, or was going to punish me for the liberty my eyes had taken, hastened after the archbishop, who entered a closet, and having beckoned me in, closed the door.

" 'I perceive, friend,' said he, throwing himself upon a sofa, and eying me with an encouraging look, 'thou hast need of a puchero.'

" 'In truth, your reverence' said I, 'I have need of fifty, at least; for it seems to me, by certain indications hereabouts—passing my palm over my stomach, that I could devour as many; and if one be entitled to arrears, seeing that a

puchero is the natural food of your reverence's dependents, and that it is fifty blessed days, at least, since *tocino* or *garbanzos* have found their way in my direction, I may perhaps be bold enough to ask a stretch of your reverence's generosity.'

‘‘‘Thou shalt not want a puchero when thou hast earned it, friend,’ said the archbishop: ‘what is thy name?’

‘‘‘*Pablo*, at your grace’s service, as I was called by my mother and father; but more commonly known by the name of *Simplecito*.’

‘‘‘Thine is an honest face, *Pablo*,’ said the archbishop; ‘and I will propose a bargain to thee. Thou hast no doubt heard of the indulgence that has been published, to all penitents who may be present at the execution to-morrow?’

‘‘‘I have heard,’ said I, ‘of the same; and

your reverence's consideration for poor sinners is common talk in Toledo.'

" ' Is it thy intention, Pablo, to take advantage of it ? '

" ' Reverend father,' said I, ' he who fasts every day, may well be exempt from penance.'

" ' Ay, Pablo,' returned the archbishop, ' were the fast voluntary ; but thine is of necessity.'

" ' Then doubtless, your reverence,' said I,— but my speech being indiscreet, I stopped.

" ' Say on, Pablo,' said the archbishop; ' I will not take offence at the freedom of thy speech.'

" ' If your reverence will excuse me,' I was about to say, ' that your reverence doubtless intended taking advantage of your proclamation, since exemption from penance can be excused only by voluntary fasting.'

" ' I perceive thou art a wag, Pablo,' re-

turned the archbishop, ‘though thy name be *Simplecito*: but, harkee! archbishops are but mortals.’

“ ‘ So the grave teaches us,’ said I,—‘ *Habemos morir.*’

“ ‘ Thou art a moralist, also, I perceive,’ said the archbishop; ‘ and thou speakest truly. But archbishops are mortals, not in their deaths only, but in their lives also; and have need of penance like other men. To-morrow, at the hour of the execution, I must needs perform high mass, and my absence would be missed; thou, Pablo, shalt join the penitents in my stead: my power, friend, extends to transferring my sins to thee,—dost thou understand?’

“ ‘ But unless,’ said I, ‘ it extends yet a little farther, I would rather be excused from bearing any greater burden than my own.’

“ ‘ It does,’ said the archbishop: ‘ it does: if thou couldst read, thou wouldst learn in the

lives of the saints, that Saint Pasqual performed every year a pilgrimage to the altar of St. Theresa, near Oviedo, in the Asturias, by deputy: thou shalt be my deputy to-morrow:*

* There is nothing unusual in this delegation of penance which the Archbishop of Toledo proposed to throw upon the other. The example of Saint Pasqual has been very universally followed, and is looked upon as an excellent precedent in the Catholic church. This delegation of a pious duty is of common occurrence in Switzerland, in the pilgrimages made to the sacred image at Einsiedeln, in the canton of Schwytz. Those who would willingly benefit by the virtues of the sacred image at Einsiedeln, but whose temporal concerns interfere with the duties of a pilgrimage, seek out some poorer pilgrim, whose earthly kingdom is less, and whose piety is greater, than theirs; and to him or her, the duties of a representative are confided. Two or three florins are generally given for his prayers, and other sums for the purchase of masses for the souls of friends. The author of these volumes, when travelling in Switzerland, heard of a woman resident in a village in Lucerne, whose reputation for sanctity was so great, that she had obtained the lucrative appointment of representative *auprès de la Sainte Vierge*, at Einsiedeln, for all the wealthy people in the *Commune*; and that she made four pilgrimages every year to the sacred shrine upon their account. The same custom obtains in Spain; especially in Catalonia, where pilgrimage is frequently performed to Montserate by delegation.

the penance, believe me, will be fully equal to the additional burden of sin thou shalt bear. I will reward thy obedience with an order on my cook for thy dinner to-morrow ; after which, thou shalt have two duros, and quit Toledo ; which will be no hardship to thee, since thou canst get thy bread in Talavera or in Madrid as well as here : what sayest thou ?'

" 'I say,' returned I—for in truth, señores, the archbishop spoke truly—'I am obedient to your reverence's wishes : and the archbishop rising from the sofa, and putting some quartos on the table, as an earnest, desired me to take them up, and to be punctual : and by the by,' added he, as I was about leaving the closet, 'I absolve thee from the duty of confession for this week :' and with a wave of the hand, he again threw himself on the sofa, and I left the palace. And so, señores, I am here among you, the delegate

of the archbishop, who I hope has benefited by my obedience. And now, if I am not greatly mistaken, it is time to go and profit by my order on the archbishop's kitchen,—for though I have not been neglectful of the puchero that has just now disappeared, I fancy I have yet a corner left for the liberality of his reverence : ” and having so said, the narrator, with a comical bow, left the circle.

Eight persons of the company had now related the cause that had led them to assume the penitent's dress, and there now remained but three, all of whom had done marvellous justice to the puchero, and whose cloaks and other garments, now that the penitential garb was laid aside, seemed little else than bundles of rags. “ Señor,” said I, addressing one of the three, “ it is now thy turn to relate to the company, the reason of thy appearance amongst us.”

“ In truth, señor,” replied he, “ I have no relation to make to this worthy company. The reason of my appearance as a penitent, is this half duro that lies snug in the end of my girdle.”

“ And I,” said he who sat next to the last speaker, “ have a precisely similar reason to produce.”

“ And I, ” said the third, and last of the company, “ have also to allege the temptation of this half duro, as the cause of my penitence.”

“ Pray, señores,” said I, “ please to be more explicit; for I confess that I, for one, am as much in the dark as ever.”

“ Why, then,” said the first of the three, “ this is the truth of the matter; that I—and I have no doubt, my two companions also,—are indebted to the liberality of the Dominicans for these half duros, which we received upon con-

dition of adding by our presence, to the respectability of this day's procession; and no bad day's work either, with a puchero into the bargain, for which, señor, we are all your debtors."

" And in consideration of that puchero, señores, which seems to have been to your liking," said I, " you will perhaps excuse me from following the example of this company: the wine-skin, I perceive, has become a mere skeleton, and the fire scarcely gives us light enough to direct it to our mouths,—so as you were unanimous in agreeing to my first proposal, I trust you will agree with the same unanimity to my second, which is, that we say 'A Dios, señores;' and having so said, make the best of our way to the city;" and no one offering any objection to this proposal, the salutation passed round, and every one left the Alcazar.

“Señor,” said the accomplice of the serenade, in a whisper, as he overtook me under the gateway of the posada, “am I to consider my services engaged? she is a lady of excelling beauty, and worthy the pursuit of so noble a caballero.”

What answer I chose to return to the musician’s interrogatory, forms no part of this history.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN WHICH IS BEGUN THE FACETIOUS STORY OF PABLO,
SURNAMED SIMPLECITO.

STROLLING the following morning below the mound upon which stands the Franciscan convent, I perceived seated upon a little hillock, one, whose face seemed not entirely strange to me; and upon approaching nearer, I had no difficulty in recognizing the features of him who had appeared amongst the penitents, the day before, as the deputy of the archbishop.

“A fortunate meeting, friend,” said I; “I promised thee a puchero every day for a week, and would not break my word: this duro will season it with a mouthful of wine; but tell me

if the archbishop has kept his word to thee; and if thou art likely to keep thy promise to him in leaving Toledo?"

"Señor, I swore it in presence of the Saints, and of the archbishop! Alas, 't is this that grieves me to the heart: 'tis hard for one who has grown grey in his native place, to lay his bones elsewhere. True, as the archbishop said, I can beg my bread as well in Talavera or Madrid, as in Toledo; but it is not the bread only, señor, but the place where we eat it. *Santa Maria!* I would rather dine upon cabbage-leaves in the Plaza Real of Toledo, than sit at the table of the coregidor of Madrid. 'T is a sore separation: I left Toledo, as I promised to the archbishop, at sun rise; and for three good hours here have I sat, within sight of the Alcazar; and God only knows when I may find hardness of heart enough to go on my journey."

“And which way lies thy journey, friend?” said I.

“I’ll follow the Tagus,” replied Pablo,— ‘twill be an old friend.”

“I could wish to tempt thee in another direction,” said I. “I purpose setting out this very day for Madrid, where one may pick up a living better than elsewhere: thou seemest an honest and a shrewd old fellow, upon whom I would not grudge a cloak to thy back, and a mule to carry thee: I will feed thee by the way; and in return thou shalt entertain me with thy history, which, from what I could gather yesterday, may contain some passages worthy of being known.”

“Who can resist the entreaties of so generous a caballero!” said my companion. “Believe me, señor, you will not find me an incumbrance: you are not the first noble I have served; and

and though it will be a difficult matter to turn my back upon the Tagus, yet the cloak you speak of, and the mule, and above all, the company of so worthy a caballero, and the honour of being in his service, will make amends for greater evils."

"Occupy yet another hour, friend," said I, "in looking at the towers of Toledo: I will return hither within that time, and we shall then set forward on our journey;" and so saying, I returned hastily to the city; got my two mules ready—(for it will be recollected that I was the owner of two, one of which the Pilgrim had bestrode) purchased a cloak for my new attendant, and proceeded to the spot where I had left Pablo, whom I found seated on the same hillock; and being speedily mounted, our mules' heads were turned in the direction of the capital.

“Ah! city of my birth, and of my affections; magnificent Toledo! I shall never see thee more. *Dios la guarde.*”

“Cheer up, friend Pablo,” said I; “thou shalt by and by see a puchero, and God will no doubt take care of Toledo in thy absence;” and putting my mule into a trot, and beckoning to Pablo to do the same, I soon found myself entering the narrow sandy valley that stretches to the northward of Toledo. Here it was necessary to bring our mules to a walk, for the valley is steep and the sand deep and loose; and following the example of my companion, I turned round upon my mule to catch a last glimpse of regal Toledo, which, notwithstanding that I had seen almost all the cities of Spain, seemed to me the noblest of them all, scarcely excepting even Granada itself: but a sudden bend of the valley shutting out Toledo from

the view, I beckoned to Pablo to come alongside of me; and he, striking his heels into his mule, was speedily jogging by my side.

“Friend Pablo,” said I, “I have not forgotten the intimation thou gavest yesterday in the Alcazar, that if it had been thy own piccadillos thou hadst been called upon to relate, the story would not have been devoid of interest. The road for more than a league to come, will not let our mules get beyond a walk, and the mules’ feet among the sand, make no noise; so in fulfilment of our bargain, I propose that thou makest a beginning of thy story, which will help us agreeably on our way through this desert country; for I have no doubt that one who has lived in the world so many years as thou hast, and so shrewd in speech, has seen something of its ways, and has picked up some little matter of anecdote on the journey.”

“ Alas, señor,” returned Pablo, “ the shrewdness of which you speak, and which I confess has sometimes gained me credit, has after all turned to little account; else I would not for the sake of a couple of *duros* and a *puchero*, have consented to leave Toledo. Wit and good fortune do not always go together; as they say in the proverbs of our country, ‘ fortune favours fools;’ but if one might choose between the two, I would still say, give me a crust of bread, and wit to season it: and touching your proposal, señor, I am ready to fulfil my part of the bargain; but as for the entertainment which you promise yourself from my narration, I fear you may scarcely find in it that which you expect. Nevertheless, I am altogether at your disposal;” and while our mules slowly toiled up the sandy valley, Pablo spoke in the following manner.

“ Some men rise in the world, señor, and others fall. A water-carrier may live to see his son a canon, and a canon’s grandson may chance to be a water-carrier. The latter is my case,—not that I have the honour to be descended from a canon; but if a son never fell below the station of his father, I would not now be turning my back upon Toledo for the sake of a duro.

“ My father was under custodier of the *Preciosidades* in the cathedral: an office, as you may well believe, señor, of some trust, and never bestowed but upon an honest man and a good Catholic. My mother was ambitious that in God’s good time I should slip into my father’s post; and took pains to educate me in such a way as might be most likely to secure it, by carrying me with her regularly to mass, and enjoining me upon no account to neglect paying reverence to all the canons and pre-

bendaries of the cathedral,—by taking care to be bareheaded when they passed by me in the street,—by begging their blessing, and in every way by which I could shew a reverence for the church and its servants. All this was no compulsion so long as I was a child: I was sometimes employed in little offices about the cathedral, and was always sure of being rewarded for my diligence by a quarto, or a slice of melon. My mother looked upon me as already installed in my father's office; and many congratulations she received, on possessing a son who was destined to make the fortunes of the family.

“ ‘ I can see no reason,’ said my mother to her husband, one day when they thought me asleep; ‘ I can see no reason why our Pablo should not be declared thy successor before thou art called to paradise.’

“ ‘ But,’ said my father, ‘ as to wait for that

event might greatly retard his advancement in the world, suppose we breed him to the priesthood.'

“ ‘ And our Pablo be cura,’ said my mother.

“ ‘ Ay, a cura,’ said my father.

“ ‘ Possibly a prebendary,’ said my mother, ‘ who knows ! ’

“ ‘ Who knows ! ’ said my father.

“ ‘ Why not a canon, some day?’ said my mother ; ‘ our Pablo a canon ! ’

“ ‘ Why not, indeed?’ responded my father ; and it was settled accordingly, that I should be a cura of a certainty, and in good time a canon ; and that thus the delay that might occur in my father’s promotion to paradise, should not stand in the way of my advancement below.

“ For my own part, however, I had just about the same time come to a totally different conclusion : certain unlucky thoughts that entered into

my mind, determined me to be neither the one nor the other. While my ambitious parents had been deliberating upon my future course in life, I had become almost a man ; and one day, in leaving the house of a canon, who sometimes employed me in little errands, I saw a sight that put out of my head the cathedral and the preciosidades, and which resolved me not to accept even the bishopric itself. But this part of my story requires that I should not pass it lightly over, since the occurrences of this time led to many important events.

“ It was the next morning after I had listened to the conversation which I have just detailed, that my father addressed me in this manner. ‘ Pablo, thou hast been now sufficiently long under thy father’s roof ; thou art a big lad,—not deficient in wit, and must not spend thy time as thy father’s assistant. I design better things for

thee. I have spoken to the very reverend father Mendoza, one of the canons of this city, who commends thee for thy inclination towards the church, and offers to receive thee into his house, on condition that thou wilt make thyself useful ; and who, if thou behavest well, will provide for thee in the church. Be obedient and respectful ; temperate in thy eating,—zealous in thy religious duties, and moral in thy doings : thou wilt have nothing to complain of under father Mendoza's roof,—for he has the reputation of being the most devout, as well as the most charitable of all the canons of Toledo. Above all, Pablo,' continued my father, ' consider thyself, from this hour, devoted to the service of the church ; and study to be worthy of the choice thou hast made.' And with these words, my father dismissed me.

“ ‘ No doubt, Pablo,’ said my mother, ‘ thou

wilt be well off in the house of the reverend canon ; but thou knowest there is always a puchero for thee at mid-day in thy father's house, if thou hast a mind ; ' and as my mother kissed me, she slipt a forty-real gold piece into my hand.

“ The picture of father Mendoza (God rest his soul !) is now before me ; the pot-belly that forced him, when he walked, to carry his hands behind his back,—the thick neck, that threw his head forward upon his breast,—the satisfied expression about the lips, round which were planted a thousand recollections of stews and other dainties,—the little grey, twinkling eyes, that without squinting looked two ways at once, as if they were accustomed to stealthy glances at other things than pictures and prayer-books, beads and breviaries.

“ The canon's establishment consisted of a

housekeeper and her niece, and two little orphans of six or eight years old; and perhaps, señor, it will be agreeable to you, that I should describe the establishment more particularly, since the subsequent events of my own life are in some degree connected with them."

"Leave out nothing, Pablo," said I, "that is material to thy story."

"The housekeeper of the canon, whose name was Doña Helena, was an Asturian; and pray, señor, may I inquire if you have ever visited the Asturias? for if so, it is unnecessary for me to describe Doña Helena."

I assured Pablo, that having never visited the Asturias, he would confer a favour upon me by describing Doña Helena.

"The women of the Asturias," continued Pablo, "are nearly all alike. Doña Helena would, however, have been looked upon as a

pattern woman even in the Asturias. Three Castilian women,—and they, your highness knows, are not small,—would have been less bulky than Doña Helena. She was as upright as a palm tree,—but there the comparison ends; for the body of the palm tree is less bulky than its head. Santa Maria! what a pair of legs: and the very look of her hand and arm, were enough to make one quake. As for her face, it could be seen only at a distance—the view, when near, being intercepted by various rotundities; it was however such a face, señor, as one might suppose would be attached to such a body.

“ ‘Child,’ said she, looking down upon me, though I was then a well grown youth of nearly seventeen, ‘thy business will be to wait upon me; consider me as the mistress of this house.’

“ ‘Madam,’ said I, ‘you will not find me deficient in my duties; but I have come hither to

be instructed for the church:’ upon saying which I received a double box on the ears, that made them tingle the rest of the day.

“ Ah, señor, would that I could renew the fire and feelings of my youth, that I might describe the niece of Doña Helena,—señora Zanina: at mention of her name, I am again young; forty years are annihilated, and I am once more the boy whose lip is but beginning to shew the tinge of manhood. Zanina had then seen but fifteen summers; and form and countenance were but just opened into the blushing beauty of the timid and half-conscious maiden,—her complexion was a clear brown, yet fair, and tinged with a tint like that which enriches the dark coat of the mellow peach; her eyes,—but I am not able to describe her eyes; for I could never look into them. I know their glance flashed deep; but turned down,

what soft beauty lurked around the lids ! Her hair, dark, silky, and luxuriant, strayed loose over her gently falling shoulders,—and her form —her foot, her step, her hand,—ah, señor ! this was the sight that resolved me against accepting a canon's chair.

“ As for the two orphan children, as they were called, they were Asturians in make, and yet in features they bore a marvellous resemblance to the canon ; and one could not well help remarking, that notwithstanding the tyrannical disposition of Doña Helena, her tyranny was never exercised upon the orphans, who were treated with motherly affection, and permitted to indulge in as many mischievous pranks as they had an inclination for.

“ Mine, I had wit enough to perceive at once, was not likely to be a post much to my mind ; and had it not been, that on the very first night

of my arrival, I caught a glimpse of señora Zanina, I believe that next morning I should have found my way back to my mother's puchero. But, señor," said Pablo, suddenly breaking off in his narrative, "if I am not greatly mistaken, I perceive a venta in the hollow before us,—as for me, I have not yet broken my fast,—and if your highness see fit, it appears to me that a little time might be profitably spent under its roof."

"The proposal is not without reasons to enforce it, Pablo," said I; "so let us make towards it,—and by and by we shall set out upon our journey and thy story at the same time;" and so saying, we urged forward our mules at a brisk trot, and soon rode into the court-yard of the venta, for such indeed the house proved to be.

CHAPTER XXIX.

IN WHICH THE ADVENTURE OF PABLO IS BROUGHT
NEARLY TO A CONCLUSION.

WHEN a reasonable time had been employed in despatching such viands as the venta afforded, we were again seated on our mules, and recommenced our journey.

“ ‘T is more than forty years,’ said Pablo, “ since I journeyed this way ; and then it was not with my own will.”

“ I did not know, friend,” said I, “ that thou hadst ever visited the metropolis.”

“ That have I,” said Pablo, “ as your highness shall by and by hear.”

“ Presently, if it please thee,” said I; “ for thou hast sketched so bewitching a portrait of Zanina, that I long to learn more of her; as well as of thy own adventures.”

“ Ah, *señor*,” said Pablo, “ youth is youth; very different things are youth and age; and death is different from them all. You are young, *señor*, as I was then; I am old,—and Zanina is neither; she is in her grave! nevertheless you shall have the continuation of my story.” And Pablo accordingly continued his narrative.

“ There could be little interest, *señor*, in detailing the history of a love affair between one who is now approaching his sixtieth year, and another who has long since left this world: it is enough to say, that I was scarcely established in the house of the canon, before I became desperately enamoured of Zanina, and she, for her

part, was not unfavourably disposed towards me. Ah, señor, it was not to be wondered at, that one who was every way worthy of a prince, should have returned the kindness of poor Pablo. Doña Helena, as I learned from herself, had long exercised over her the cruellest tyranny; and two things contributed, just at this time, to increase this tyranny: the one, that she speedily discovered the inclination I felt for Zanina, which I have reason to believe she meant to have appropriated to herself; the other, that Zanina had found favour in the sight of the canon,—and therefore her ill humour was vented upon her niece; not that she valued the duties of the canon, but to bestow a glance upon the immature charms of a señorita, like Zanina, seemed to her an affront to the whole province of Asturia.

“ But this state of things, señor, speedily

came to an end. One night, when lying in bed, meditating upon the charms of my mistress, and upon the difficulties that stood in the way of my wishes, my meditations were suddenly cut short by something that pushed open the shutters of my window. I started from my mattress, and stealthily crossing the room, saw by the light of the full moon, that a ladder was planted against my window, and that Doña Helena had already set her foot upon it. Not knowing, señor, whether love or hatred were at the bottom of this, but neither being greatly to my mind, I snatched up my clothes with what haste I could, and leaving the room, shut and locked the door on the outside; then cautiously but quickly descending the stair, I hastened into the court, which I reached just in time to see the skirt of Doña Helena's dress disappear within my window; and no time being to

be lost, I ran forward, snatched away the ladder, and hastened with it into the garden.

“ Now, señor, it is a singular thing, and scarcely to be credited, yet not the less true, that the same night upon which Doña Helena had resolved to act in the manner just related, the canon had also selected for pushing his suit with the charming Zanina. Stealing round the house, in order to re-enter the court on the other side, and watch the actions of Doña Helena,— and also with the intention of casting a glance upward at the window of my mistress, I was not a little surprised on turning the angle, to perceive another tall ladder reared against the window of Zanina’s chamber, which was on the second story, near to the roof of the house; and my surprise, you may believe, señor, was not lessened, when I found that the moving body which was then at least three-fourths up the ladder,

was no other than the fat carcass of the canon. Jealousy, as well as fears for Zanina, instantly took possession of me; and without considering consequences, I darted forward, and giving the ladder a kick with my whole strength, sent it from the ground, and at the same instant down fell the ladder, preceded by the weightier body of the canon. ‘Santa Maria !’ were all the words he uttered; he never breathed more, but lay stone dead at my feet.

“ This, said I to myself, is an awkward business; and for a few moments I remained undecided as to what course I should pursue. Here, said I within myself, is a dead canon; and the canon’s housekeeper is locked in my chamber ! how can this state of things be made to advantage me, and forward my views, with respect to Zanina: and in the first place, how must I extricate myself from the scrape of having been

instrumental in killing so great a church dignitary? But I did not deliberate long; for though young, I was of a decided character. I seized the dead man by the shoulders, and succeeded, though not without difficulty, in hauling him into the court, and then into Doña Helena's chamber, which was luckily on the ground floor, and there, laying him upon his back, left him. I next seized the small ladder, and mounted by its help towards the window of my chamber, so that just my head might be on a level with the window, but out of the reach of Doña Helena. As I ascended, I could hear her ineffectual attempts to open the door; and could also hear her imprecations upon myself.

“ ‘ Rogue, wretch, miscreant!’ cried she, running towards the window; ‘ instantly unfasten the door: an unlucky trick of sleep walking has brought me into thy chamber, and thou

would'st ruin me in the opinion of the worthy canon, my master, who will reward thee for thy mischievous intention, I promise thee.'

" ' Doña Helena,' said I, ' the worthy canon is now incapable of rewarding either you or me.' And I then related to Doña Helena the precise way in which he had come by his death,— only saying nothing of my having kicked the ladder.

" ' The faithless, base, perfidious man!' said Doña Helena; ' the vile, deceitful slut !'

" ' Now, Doña Helena,' said I, ' listen to reason. I have laid the dead canon in your chamber; and it must be clear to you, that I have nothing to do but to go to the corregidor in order to get you hanged; for a dead man would be found in your chamber, and you in mine,— and who do you think will believe your story about sleep-walking, or think otherwise than

that you killed the good canon in order that you might the better prosecute a little love affair with me? But, Doña Helena, I have no inclination to hang anybody; all I desire, is to espouse señora Zanina.'

" ' Espouse señora Zanina ! ' cried Doña Helena; ' art thou not breeding for the church ? '

" ' Such,' said I, ' was indeed my intention once; but the sudden death of the good canon has deprived me of a patron,—and this accident has determined me in the resolution, to which the charms of the señora Zanina had before greatly urged me.'

" ' The charms of señora Zanina, indeed ! ' said Doña Helena, with a disdainful air and tone.

" ' Yes,' said I, ' the charms of señora Zanina. Now, all that I require of thee, is this,—thy written consent, as she is not yet of age,

and a dowry of a thousand crowns: so give me, without delay, the key of the strong box, and write a consent to our nuptials; and when we are married, I promise thee I will open the door and restore thee to liberty, and the duty of burying the canon.'

" But, cunning as I was, señor, I was not a match for Doña Helena. ' Well,' said she, ' I perceive thou hast the best of it, Pablo,—there is the key of my strong box,'—dropping it into my outstretched palm; ' and now, Pablo, bring me the materials for writing the consent which thou desirest,—make haste, good Pablo; for I long to be delivered from this prison; so pray descend, and return with all despatch; and then hasten thy nuptials with Zanina, who, though rather young, will make thee a good wife.' And without further parley, I descended the ladder, taking care to remove it after me;

and running to the canon's room, easily found what I went in search of, and returned with all expedition, though not without having snatched a moment just to try the key which Doña Helena had given me, and to cram a handful or two of coin into my pocket.

“ ‘ I cannot reach farther,’ said Doña Helena, when I had ascended the ladder, and held up the materials for writing,—though keeping myself out of the range of her arm. ‘ Good Pablo, stretch thy arm a little farther ; now, ’t is almost far enough ; I but just touch the bottle.’

“ I saw, in imagination, the consent written and signed, and the blushing charms of Zanina beside me at the altar ; and I pushed my arm a little higher. At the same moment, Doña Helena, whose inability to reach farther was but pretence, suddenly darted her arm downward, and seizing my wrist with a grasp of iron, in

an instant dragged me from my footing. ‘Now, *Picaron*,’ said she, ‘I might have my revenge,—I might let go my hold, and dash thy brains out; but I will be more merciful, and only chastise thee:’ and she then pulled me up, and dragged me in at the window. ‘Come, come, sirrah,’ continued she, ‘thy struggles will avail thee nothing; I could make minced meat of fifty such as thee. God help Zanina, with such a bridegroom!’ continued she, dealing out blows that might have stunned a mule. In short, señor, I was a twig in her hand; and with such dexterity did Doña Helena use her advantage, that she soon drove all power of resistance out of me; till, being perfect mistress of the field, she tied me hand and foot, and then leisurely lowered herself from the window, and left me.

“ By this time it was day-break; but bruised all over, I was unable to release myself,—and

during two or three hours, continued lying where Doña Helena had left me, cursing sometimes inwardly, sometimes aloud, the fatal credulity that led me to distrust the evil intentions of the Asturian. ‘Ah!’ said I, ‘well have I been named *Simplecito*.’ I plainly perceived that all my hopes were at an end; that Zanina was lost to me for ever; and that the spite of Doña Helena (for nothing so enrages a woman as disdaining her advances) might even pursue me to danger, by laying the canon’s death at my door. But, señor,’ said Pablo, making a pause in his narration, “I know not how it may be with your highness; but the heat of the sun scorches my legs, and even finds its way through this good cloak. Yonder, at no great distance, in that saffron field on the left, is a clump of olives, beneath which we may rest till an hour or two after mid-day; what

says your highness to my proposal?—and the heat has besides brought upon me an intolerable thirst, which, luckily, this wine-skin which your highness had the forethought to bring from the venta, will speedily satisfy.”

“ Truly, friend,” said I, “ shade, and a draught from the wine-skin, will neither of them be amiss;” and so diverging from the road, we urged our mules towards the spot pointed out by Pablo; and there dismounting, and easing our saddles, we seated ourselves on the grass, while the mules began to crop the sweet herbs that grew around.

“ It appears to me, friend Pablo,” said I, after we had each taken a draught from the wine-skin, and deposited it in the midst of a rosemary bush, “ that thou madest but indifferent use of thy advantages: with one enemy dead, and another locked up, it might have

been no difficult matter for thee to carry off the fair Zanina."

" So, señor, I have often since thought," replied Pablo; " but in truth, it was my eagerness to get possession of Zanina that ruined me; for without the consent in writing of Doña Helena, the church would not have consented to our nuptials."

" Well, Pablo," said I, " please to continue thy narrative: thou wert lying on the floor, bruised, and bound hand and foot; what next befel thee?"

" Señor," said Pablo, " to say the truth, I am not just at this moment in a story-telling humour: the infirmities of the body will force themselves upon us: and I confess that the heat of the sun, and the mouthful of wine, have made me somewhat drowsy; and if your highness would indulge me with one half hour, I

shall be ready by that time to satisfy your curiosity." And Pablo, who appeared already almost nodding, stretched himself out and dropped fast asleep.

While Pablo enjoyed a siesta—to which, for my part, I felt no way disposed—my mind wandered away from him and his adventures, and reverted to my own; and all the individuals with whom I had ever been in any way connected, passed in review before me. There was but one, of all those whom the events of the last five years had thrown in my way, with whose subsequent history I was unacquainted,—Violante—whose charms of person, and graces of mind, had made no small impression upon me; and who had been deprived of her husband in the same hour in which she had become a wife. All, save Violante, were accounted for; their

histories were filled up; but there was yet a blank space left for her. Isabel was at that very moment journeying homeward; and would speedily be restored to the arms of her husband. My preceptor had been hanged at Cadiz. My poor friend Ramirez, the bridegroom of Violante, had been poisoned; and the marquesa had poisoned herself. Paulo was dead and buried; and his soul by this time well nigh prayed out of purgatory. My one-eyed servant, Gaston de Pedralba, was settled for life with his sweet Paulina; and so was Maraquita with the Alcalde, though perhaps not quite so much to her satisfaction. Henrique, the avenger of Inez, had doubtless buried himself in a cloister; and the good pilgrim, my companion, had returned to his convent and his duties; so that Violante alone, might be living or dead, married or

single, for ought that I could know; and continuing to muse upon Violante and her perfections, I yielded gradually to the influence of the heat, and the example of Pablo, and dropped asleep.

CHAPTER XXX.

IN WHICH THE HISTORY OF PABLO IS BROUGHT TO AN END;
AND WHEREIN ALSO, WILL BE FOUND EXPLAINED FOR
THE FIRST TIME, THE TRUE VALUE OF POVERTY.

“Señor,” said Pablo, rousing me, “the heat of the day is somewhat abated,—and because the roads hereabouts do not carry the best reputation, it may be well to set forward on our journey, in order that, before night-fall, we may reach some venta or posada, where we may find all that travellers stand in need of. For my part, señor, I already begin to feel the ground in my stomach;”—and so mounting our mules, which had been follow-

ing the example of their masters, we speedily regained the road, and set forward at an easy trot.

“ To-morrow, *señor*,” said Pablo, “ God willing, our mules will carry us into Madrid. Your highness has not yet visited the metropolis?”

“ No, Pablo,—but I purpose, as thou sayest, God willing, to eat my *puchero* in that city to-morrow.”

“ *Señor*,” said Pablo, “ ‘t is a noble city; and but for Toledo, it would be the finest city in Spain.”

“ Which way lies it, Pablo?” said I; “ can’t thou point it out to me betwixt us and the sun?”

“ *Señor*, no; it lies not that way: and it being, as I have already said, forty good years since I travelled this road, I can scarcely tell your highness where to look for it; but I

have not forgotten what my eyes saw in it, señor."

"Then tell me something of what thou sawest, Pablo; for I am curious to know a little of the wonderful sights that await me."

"Ah, señor," said Pablo, "the wonders we are leaving behind us! They speak of their Prado and their Pardo,—but commend me to the Plaza Real of Toledo. As for their churches, señor, the preciosidades in the cathedral of Toledo would fill them all: no Tagus have they; nothing but a little brook with a long name, which it 's my belief a thirsty mule might drink dry:" and, conversing in this manner, we rode into the little town of Valdemoro, and alighted at the gate of the principal posada.

"Now Pablo," said I, when the puchero was despatched, "nothing hinders thee from

continuing thy relation. The posadero, thou perceivest, has dropped asleep,—and it seems to me that with an occasional mouthful of this val de peñas, thou wilt be able to go on merrily with thy adventures.”

“ I left off, as your highness observed,” said Pablo, “ lying on the floor, bruised, and bound hand and foot. But, recovering in some degree from the effects of Doña Helena’s violence, I was able to make some efforts towards releasing myself; and, by and by, succeeded in gaining my feet, and freeing my arms: but this little mended my condition; Doña Helena had removed the ladder from my window, and the door continued locked; so that I was as much her prisoner, as she had been mine. Soon, however, I heard steps slowly ascending the stairs, and presently a heavy weight was thrown against the door; the key then turned, and the

door being thrown wide, the dead body of the canon fell inside,—and Doña Helena stood at the entrance.

“ ‘Master Simplecito,’ said she, ‘pack up thy paltry things and leave this house; one good turn deserves another; thou art as much in my power now, as I was a little while ago in thine; I have but to send to the corregidor in order to get thee hanged. Here is the dead canon at thy chamber door,—and even if thy story were as good as mine, my purse is somewhat the longest,—and thou knowest, good Pablo, that a long purse is even better than a good story; so get thee out of the house, I say, else worse befall thee. As for Zanina, she’s where thou wilt have some difficulty in finding her; so, once more, if thou would’st escape the gallows, get thee gone,—and thank Doña Helena for her merciful treatment of thee.’

“ I well knew the implacable enmity which Doña Helena had conceived against me,—and perceiving the uselessness of opposing her will, I resolved to depart with all possible speed, being not without apprehensions that she might discover the depredation I had made upon her strong box, the key of which she demanded; and before another five minutes were elapsed, I had left the house of the canon Mendoza, and was wandering on the outskirts of the town: and, judging that one who had been instrumental in killing a canon, could not be welcome at the house of a father who ate the bread of the church, and feeling my pockets full of Doña Helena’s gold, I resolved at once to journey towards the capital; and it was upon that occasion, señor, near forty years ago, that I travelled along this same road, which seems to me to be in noways altered since those days.

“ It was not long, señor, before my gold disappeared. The recollection of Zanina preserved me for a while against all the temptations of Madrid,—but scanty prudence can be looked for from a lad of eighteen; and I was soon stript of every *real*. The incident with which my life commenced, is the most important, and perhaps the most curious I have to relate; the long life that followed, presents comparatively smaller interest; nevertheless, I will carry it down to the day when I had the good fortune to meet your highness. Standing one morning, without a quarto in my pocket, with my back against one of the stone pillars in the Plaza Real, and considering in what way I was to pick up my breakfast, I was accosted by one with whose countenance I was not altogether unacquainted. Ah, señor, it was my good mother, who having accidentally learned in

what direction I had bent my steps, had come all the way from Toledo in search of me. What hugging and kissing! I thought she would have died for joy. A pastel in a neighbouring cook-shop was the first fruit of the meeting; and then strolling towards the Prado, and seating ourselves on a bench, I related to her circumstantially, all that had taken place at Toledo.

“ ‘Thou wilt return with thy mother to Toledo, Pablo,’ said she; ‘thou need’st be under no alarm. Doña Helena has already given out that the canon died of a surfeit; and since thy heart is set upon Zanina, thou shalt not pine for want of her, if I can help it.’ In short, señor, I was as glad to return to Toledo, as my mother was to convey me thither, and at the end of two days I again reached my father’s house; and although he

would willingly have chastised me, my mother found means to protect me from the effects of his anger. But a sad reverse was at hand. My father fell sick, and died before I had been appointed to succeed him in his post; and my mother, soon after, followed him to the grave; and as for my inheritance, the masses which my mother bestowed upon my father, and the masses which I bestowed upon her, swallowed up the greater part of it; so that I was soon after without a real in my pocket.

“Poverty is a sad thing, *señor*! if I had had the good luck to slip into my father’s post, there would not have lived an honester man than Pablo.”

“Thou hast forgotten Doña Helena’s strong box,” said I, interrupting him.

“Ah, *señor*,” said he, “those two or three handfuls of gold I looked upon as in part pay-

ment of Zanina's dowry. However, I was, as I have said, left without a real; and, for forty years, I have never been master of a duro till this blessed day. Sometimes I picked up a few quartos by carrying a candle at a procession,—and I was sure of a real at a funeral; for more than twenty years I dined every day in the Carthusian convent; and when that and the other convents turned niggard of their soup, I picked up my victuals in the market-place as honestly as I could. Ah, señor, there's no rising in Toledo; and yet, as I said to your highness this day, I would rather be a beggar in Toledo, than a noble in Madrid. You may be sure, señor, that forty years have not passed away without a little account of peccadillos being scored against me—first, the peccadillos of youth, and then of age; but these are not worthy of your highness' ears; and have regularly been

confessed—as living in so godly a catholic city as Toledo, it was likely they should be. This, señor, is the whole of the narrative that is deserving of your highness' attention; and if I am not greatly mistaken, the night is already far spent,”—and thanking Pablo for the entertainment he had afforded me, I betook myself to my quarto, while he stretched himself on a mat beside the posadero.

The sun had scarcely tipped the summits of the sierra Guadarama, when Pablo, pushing open the door of my quarto, woke me from my slumber.

“ It is time then to be jogging on, Pablo,” said I.

“ Time, no doubt, for your highness,” replied he, “ if you desire to eat your puchero in Madrid.”

“ And why not time for thee also?”

“ Ah, señor,” said Pablo, “ it is more than my strength can bear.”

“ How, Pablo! it is the mule, not thy strength, that thou needest to carry thee to Madrid.”

“ Your highness mistakes my meaning,” replied he; “ 't is strength of mind that 's wanting, señor;—a stouter heart than Pablo's. I dreamt all the long night of Toledo; and though, God knows, I have no home there to call my own, I have a home everywhere. There 's scarce a street, señor, but what seems half my own; the Plaza Real—the court of the cathedral—the steps of the archbishop's palace—the vaults of the Alcazar,—are all so many homes to me: every one knew me, and I knew every body. ‘ Well, Pablo! ’ said a canon,—‘ how fares it with thee, Pablo? ’ said a prebendary,—‘ good day, or good night,

Pablo,' said this friar and that; 'there 's a quarto for thee, Pablo,' said one,—and 'may'st thou never want a gazpacho,' said another. Every one will miss Pablo: I was a citizen of Toledo, señor, and now I am nothing and nobody! What is it to me that the king's house is in Madrid, and that his coach and eight mules drives along the Prado; will that put bread into my mouth?—or that rich grandes and nobles parade on the prado; who among them will cast a glance at Pablo? Nay, not even a friar will have a kind word for him. Ah! señor, I have not resolution for this: youth has its follies and weaknesses; and so has age. I am too old to go a wandering: poor though I be, I am not yet tired of life; and I feel that the prospect of laying my bones elsewhere than in Toledo, would hasten my end. Take back the cloak and the mule, and let

me trudge to Toledo; and if your highness will drop into my hand a few *reals* to bear me on the way, God will not fail to reward thee."

"Pablo," said I, "God forbid that I should be the cause of abridging thy days, and making thee unhappy in thy old age. I will, as thou sayest, eat my puchero in Madrid; but thou shalt not the less eat thine in Toledo: thou shalt return on the mule that brought thee, which I freely present to thee, as well as the cloak. As for thy promise to the archbishop, keep his secret about the penitents, and he will not exact of thee the performance of thy promise."

"Señor," replied Pablo, "I heartily thank your highness for the generous offer of the mule and the cloak,—of neither of which am I in any way worthy; nor have I earned them of your

highness; but with such possessions, señor, I should speedily starve."

"How, Pablo?"

"Your highness must know that my poverty is my capital; and the interest which it bears, is charity: like any other capital, the less it grows, the less interest it bears. Pablo, with a fine shaven mule, and a new cloak, would no longer be poor Pablo; the cura, in place of dropping a quarto into my hat, would expect that I should share my gazpacho with him."

"All this may be true, Pablo," said I; "but thou might'st nevertheless sell the mule, and put the gold in safe hiding, against need."

"Ah, señor," replied he, "I should then no longer have a home everywhere; 't would be only where my gold was. Give me, if your highness please, some little to buy a few

pucheros, but leave me to my old way of life ; do not cumber me with riches.”

I found that Pablo was resolved upon being poor, and it was with difficulty that I pressed a few doblons upon him.

“ Notwithstanding these,” said I, “ thy home may be everywhere ; for thou can’t keep them in thy girdle, or where thou wilt, about thee.”

My spare mule I sold to the posadero for about half his value ; and throwing my spare cloak (for Pablo would no more accept of the cloak than the mule) over the neck of my own beast, I took the road to Madrid ; while Pablo, with a happy countenance, turned his footsteps towards Toledo. And so ended my acquaintance with Pablo.

Elated at the prospect of visiting the capital, I pricked my mule forward, picturing

to myself, as I went along, the pleasures that doubtless awaited me; and at times reverting to my past adventures, — among which, the image of Violante was frequently present, — and musing sometimes upon the past, and sometimes upon the future, I found myself entering Madrid by the gate of Toledo; and picking my way through a multitude of streets, and crossing the Plaza Mayor, I halted at the door of the fonda which is called Fontaña de Oro, and which is situated near to the Puerta del Sol, in the centre of the city.

CHAPTER XXXI.

WHICH NARRATES THE MISFORTUNE OF DON JUAN DE CARRARA; AND AT THE SAME TIME PROVES THE TRUTH OF THE SAYING, THAT “WHERE WOMEN ARE, MISCHIEF WILL BE.”

“THIS then,” said I, “is the metropolis of Spain,” as sallying from the fonda, I stood in the centre of the Puerta del Sol. “Here no doubt, if any where, a caballero with plenty of pistoles may find the means of enjoying himself;” and my face being at that time turned towards the Calle de Carretas, I slowly sauntered up that street.

It was already evening; the siesta was long since over, the balconies were deserted, and the curtains withdrawn, and all the houses were

emptying themselves of their population. From every door-way, ladies, old and young,—señoras and señoritas, were seen stepping forth, attired for the Paseo, some attended by their cortejos and amantes, and some only in expectation of them; and caballeros and militarios—priests, with their great slouched hats—and friars, with their brown, grey, or white habits, and round fat faces, and hands behind their backs, mingled in the slow, but swelling tide; and when I gained the top of the Calle de Carretas, I fell into the line of march, and was carried down the Calle del Prado, to the Paseo. Here, I found myself an object of no small attention, especially from the female part of the throng; for feeling no inclination to throw away the advantages with which nature had thought fit to gift me, I had taken care before leaving Alicante, to provide myself with a full Andalusian suit; and my satin

embroidered waistcoat, tasseled jacket, crimson girdle and slashed gaiters, which displayed a well-turned limb, set off by white silk stockings, attracted as much notice as the gilded coach of royalty, which slowly paraded itself, to claim the respect of so loyal a people as the Castilians.

Every body has seen the Prado at Madrid, and therefore I have no occasion to describe it—which is fortunate, because I have no talent that way; but its attractions are not likely to put an Andalusian out of conceit with his own country; for to one, who remembered the Paseo of Seville, and the Plaza de San Antonio of Cadiz, there could be small attraction of one kind, in the Prado of Madrid. Here, I saw no Isabels—no Marquesas—no Maraquitas — no Paulinas—no Violantes, like those whose charms were fresh in my memory. I missed the clear though dark complexion,—the glossy hair of

my countrywomen; the languid lustre of their eyes, the graceful bearing of the head and neck; the rounded, but not too ample form; the step, in which alone lay a world of charms—and above all, the vivacity, the smiles, the playfulness, that give to a paseo in Andalusia, the character of enjoyment—but the absence of which in Castile, throws over it the air of a funeral procession. “No, no,” said I within myself, as one group after another, of plain faces, and figures such as in other countries might give room for unpleasant rumours, passed by, “Isabel need not have sighed when I announced my intention of choosing a partner for life among the Castilians: if this were my only object, I might leave Madrid when I please.”

But after a few days, I recovered from this disappointment; and although I found little temptation for the exercise of gallantry, I con-

trived to employ my time to my satisfaction. I lounged about the Puerto del Sol in the morning; and took my chocolate, like other caballeros,—peeped into the church of San Isidro, to put up my paternoster, and see the veiled señoritas; sauntered through the streets, while padres and madres, guardians and dueñas enjoyed their siestas, and sometimes amused myself by picking up a *carta amatosia* dropped from a balcony, and intended perhaps for another,—mingled with the tide that rolled down the Calle de Alcala in the evening, and set many a fan in motion,* and many a proud Castilian eye on fire,—joined the hunt at the Pardo, was

* In the hands of its true mistress, the fan becomes a substitute for language. If a lady perceives that she is an object of attention to some inquisitive or admiring caballero, she has immediate recourse to her fan, that she may convey to him one most important piece of information: if she be married, she fans herself slowly; if still señorita, rapidly.—*Spain in 1830.*

seldom absent from the Corrida,* and patronised the comedy. In short, I was looked upon as a caballero of no ordinary pretensions; and those with whom I had picked up an acquaintance, treated me with the utmost consideration. But one of those, whose acquaintance led me into the most curious and most perilous of the adventures which I have yet recorded, deserves more particular mention.

One evening, when the Prado was nearly deserted; when the friars had returned to their convents, the militarios to their quarters, and the señoras and caballeros to their tertulias, I still remained seated upon one of the benches facing the Calle del Prado. The other end was occupied by a single caballero, the peculiarities of whose appearance and manner, were such as could not well pass unnoticed.

* The term commonly used for bull fight.

“ Ah, Dios ! ah, Dios !” burst at times from his lips in an accent of despair—at other times, he would mutter half aloud, “ Cowardly villain ! beautiful Isabella ! unfortunate Juan de Carrara.”

The countenance of the caballero, was as remarkable as were his expressions. It could boast of only one eye; a deep scar extended from the corner of the mouth—which it had greatly disfigured, almost to the eye that remained, which was also in some degree injured by it; and his mouth showed as scanty a furniture of teeth as that of the renowned knight of La Mancha, after he had been mauled by the shepherds. Nevertheless, it was easy to see that a noble countenance had been disfigured; and I could not but conclude, that the expressions of discontent which the caballero thus vented, were not unconnected with the change that appeared to have been but recently effected in his features.

While the caballero thus continued to bemoan his misfortunes, I felt a growing curiosity to know something of their origin; and recollecting that I had upon more occasions than one, exerted myself successfully in the affairs of others, I was the more emboldened to intrude upon his thoughts.

“Señor,” said I, “it grieves me to think that so distinguished a caballero as I am sure I have the honour to address, should have found cause for so much lamentation. I am not new to the world, nor altogether incompetent to advise how one may jostle with it successfully.”

“Alas! señor,” replied the caballero, “my misfortune admits of no remedy,—the evil is already completed; and if you were acquainted with the cause of the lamentations you have witnessed, I am persuaded you would not consider them unreasonable.”

“ Trust me, señor,” returned I, “ there are few cases altogether hopeless. If a misfortune does not admit of a remedy, it may admit of a palliation; or if it be beyond either the one or the other, such retaliation as one may justly and innocently indulge in, is not a solace to be altogether despised.”

“ Ah, señor!” said the caballero, “ for the cruel revenge that causes my lamentations, no retaliation would be too great to be just; but my nature revolts from such a solace: nevertheless, as you say you have had experience of the world, and as such expressions as you have over-heard cannot have failed to appear to you singular, if not weak, in the mouth of a Castilian, I will with your leave, give you such an explanation of my misfortune as will satisfy you; and if your experience of the world, and knowledge of mankind, enable you to point out any

means of retaliation to which a Castilian can with honour have recourse, the eternal obligations of Don Juan de Carrara shall be yours."

I assured the caballero with how much pleasure I would listen to his relation; and the coolness of the Prado being preferable to the hot air of the Fontaña de Oro, or of any other fonda or posada in Madrid, we continued sitting on the bench, only drawing somewhat nearer to each other; and the caballero then spoke in the following manner.

"I am a Castilian by birth, and an inhabitant of this city; and inherit from my father an honourable lineage, and a tract of crown land in La Mancha sufficiently large for the wants of any noble Castilian. It may perhaps be difficult for you señor to credit, that I was early distinguished for the beauty of my countenance and the perfection of my shape; yet, such is

nevertheless the truth ; and no little pride was felt by my parents, in owning a son who might preserve in the family, the personal distinctions for which, as I was told, it had been for several generations remarkable. Nor was I myself without my share of vanity ; for we Castilians are not apt to think indifferently of those qualifications which are likely to recommend us to the other sex.

“ Before I had attained to man’s estate, I was the envy of the men, and the idol of the women : I cultivated with assiduity, the graces which are found serviceable in gallantry ; and reaped a ready reward : I was a welcome visitor at all the tertulias in Madrid, and might have had almost as many love affairs on my hands, as there are señoras who stand in need of cortejos, or señoritas who desire to have amantes. This life of gallantry, suited me sufficiently well for a time ; but

the charms of Doña Isabella de Quevada made so deep an impression upon my heart, that I withdrew myself wholly from society, in order that I might pay my undivided court to so angelic a lady ; resolved, if fortune should so far befriend me, that I would lead Doña Isabella to the altar,—and whatever might be practice of my countrymen, be faithful to her till death. But before proceeding with my story, I must needs speak farther of Doña Isabella, and of the caballero her father, and of the difficulties that were opposed to those who might desire the hand of the señorita his daughter.

“Don Vincente de Quevada chanced to be not only a distinguished patron of the fine arts, but himself no indifferent artist. If he had a weakness, it was an undue admiration of beauty ; which had taught him to collect around him, pictures of the most beautiful women ; and

which led him not only almost to worship the beauty of his daughter, the lady Isabella,—to which homage indeed her charms well entitled her,—but to adopt a most singular resolution respecting her: a resolution which has, alas! been the cause of my misfortunes. Whether it might be, that Don Vincente de Quevada's admiration of beauty would not permit him to see his daughter's charms unequally matched; or that he was desirous of perpetuating beauty in his family, he formed the singular resolution of bestowing her upon the handsomest caballero in Castile.

“The resolution which Don Vincente de Quevada had taken with respect to the disposal of his daughter, was noways distasteful to the señorita herself—who being then scarcely sixteen, and not having yet disposed of her heart, felt sufficiently inclined to regard with favour, who-

soever might enjoy the high reputation which her father had determined should be the passport to her hand.

“ The name of Don Juan de Carrara—he who now recounts to you his misfortunes—was at that time known all over Madrid; and could not therefore fail to reach the ears of Don Vincente, who hastened to seek my acquaintance, and to make me known to Doña Isabella; upon whom I had no sooner cast my eyes, than I perceived her superiority over every rival; and felt for her, an inclination corresponding with the excellence of her attractions.

“ I was not however without rivals; for although my claims to personal distinction were generally admitted by the women, it can scarcely be supposed that my own sex yielded so ready an assent. My successes in the field of gallantry were on the contrary so many additional reasons

for questioning my superiority and opposing my pretensions.

“ The only one however among these rivals whose competition was formidable, or whose claims could admit of comparison with mine, was Don Manuel de Balbas, between whom and myself, I admit that public opinion was divided; though the larger share had unquestionably fallen to my lot; and Don Vincente, the father of Doña Isabella, after some little hesitation, and more scrutiny than any thing short of the object in view would have tolerated, dismissed Don Manuel, and received me at his house as his adopted son-in-law. Whether Doña Isabella had any voice in this decision, I cannot take upon me to determine; for my part, I confess that my anxiety for a preference arose as much from a desire to establish my claims over those of my rival, as from passion for the

daughter of Don Manuel; for the resolution of Don Vincente was well-known throughout Madrid, and it would have been a grievous humiliation to have had the laugh of the city against me.

“ Nothing could exceed the rage, vexation and disappointment of my rival, when the decision of Don Vincente was known to him; for by it, his personal vanity—his inclination for Doña Isabella—and his anticipations of her father’s pesetas, were at the same time disappointed; for there is no question but that he was enamoured of Doña Isabella; and it is certain also, that her portion was more valuable to him than it was to me, who had the advantage of him in riches. I confess, that I was not moderate in my victory; and I doubtless exasperated Don Manuel by my haughty bearing. I carried my head higher than ever; dressed with more

studied elegance; and in every way, claimed what was now indeed almost universally granted, the distinction of being the handsomest caballero in Madrid. But, alas! my triumph was destined to be short, as you shall presently hear.

“Don Manuel cherished, in secret, a cowardly design of humbling my vanity; and of at the same time, and by the same means, securing to himself the possession of Doña Isabella. This scar, this sightless eye, this unfurnished mouth, bear testimony to the wicked and cowardly revenge of my rival. For my part, I harboured no suspicion of Don Manuel: I knew him to be a Castilian, and believed him to be an honorable caballero, as well as a devout Catholic; and although foiled in his wishes, and humbled in his pretensions, I thought him incapable of an action that would have disgraced even an Andalusian.”

This reflection upon the place of my nativity

I permitted to pass without any observation; for although it might be undeserved as regarded myself, I knew it to be not greatly misapplied; and the caballero continued—

“ I was accustomed to spend every evening at the house of Don Vincente; and but a few weeks had yet to elapse before I should become the husband to Doña Isabella, whose graces of person, and sweetness of disposition, taught me every day more and more to despise a life of gallantry, and to attach myself to her only. One evening, after having spent some hours as usual in the society of my charming mistress, who had upon that occasion allowed more proofs of regard to escape her than she had hitherto cared to avow, I was returning to my house, which is situated near to the Puerta de Atocha, when passing leisurely along the Calle de la Madalina, ruminating on the charms of my mis-

tress, and upon the bounty of nature, in having made me what I was; I was suddenly set upon by three ruffians, whose brutal usage has made me, señor, what you now see me.

“ When, several weeks after the commission of this outrage, I was first in a condition to rise and glance in my mirror, no words could describe the rage and despair that took possession of me, when I perceived the extent of my calamity. I shrunk back in horror from a countenance upon which I had been so long accustomed to look with complacency: I cursed my ill stars; and more than all, I cursed my rival. I saw at once, the full extent of my misfortune: by depriving me of my claim to distinction, it deprived me at the same time of my mistress; nor was I long before I received a confirmation of my cruellest fears. I received a visit from Don Vincente, the purport of which

was to apprise me of the change that had taken place in my destiny. It was in vain that I endeavoured to convince him of the injustice of his determination; and besought him to leave the decision in the hands of Doña Isabella: the only reply which he made was this, ‘Don Juan de Carrara, you know the resolution which I have taken; all Madrid knows it. I am heartily sorry for your misfortune,—but for which, I would have rejoiced to receive you as my son-in-law; at the same time, I am not a man to forsake a resolution, nor care to be the laughing-stock of the city; only please to glance in the mirror opposite, and tell me, on the honour of a caballero and Castilian, if you think that in bestowing my daughter upon you, I should be adhering to the resolution I have formed?’

“It was unnecessary for me to glance in the mirror; alas! I knew too well what it would

reveal. I might indeed have hinted to Don Vincente, that although the cruel envy of my rival had deprived me of an eye, and disfigured my countenance, he might nevertheless boast of grandsons and grand-daughters with two eyes, and cheeks without scars, and mouths with the usual furniture; but I perceived that the old fool's admiration of beauty had received a shock that would for ever prevent him from consenting to the alliance; and with many polite condolences, Don Vincente took leave of me.

“ The same stubbornness of resolution that determined Don Vincente against receiving me as his son-in-law, confirmed him in his purport to bestow Doña Isabella upon my rival; for although he could not but condemn the unmanly revenge of Don Manuel, yet Don Manuel occupied the place in public opinion which had formerly been accorded to me; and he was

received accordingly as the favoured lover, or rather, as the adopted husband of Doña Isabella. As for the señorita herself, I foolishly calculated upon the strength of her affection, and under cover of disguise introduced myself one night into her chamber. Doña Isabella did not recognise her former lover, but shrieked and fled from so fearful an apparition; and I afterwards learned, that Don Manuel speedily occupied my place at her feet as well as in her good graces.

“ Such, señor, is the history of my misfortune, and the cause of my lamentations; and now that you have heard my relation, you will not fail to agree with me in thinking that my calamity is beyond remedy. A few days have but to elapse before Don Manuel shall lead Doña Isabella to the altar; and as for retaliating upon my rival the injury which he has done me, I am

no mean bravo, to revenge myself by assaulting him in the dark, and beating out two eyes in compensation for the one which I have lost." And with these words, Don Juan de Carrara made an end of his narrative.

CHAPTER XXXII.

SHEWING IN WHAT MANNER I ASSISTED DON JUAN DE CARRARA IN REVENGING HIMSELF UPON THE AUTHOR OF HIS MISFORTUNE; AND HOW DON MANUEL'S REVERENCE FOR THE INQUISITION CAUSED HIM TO LOSE HIS MISTRESS.

“Señor de Carrara,” said I, “I willingly grant that your misfortune is of no ordinary kind, and sufficiently justifies your lamentations;—for, to be robbed at the same time of so great a distinction as that which you possessed, and of the favour of so charming a lady as by all accounts this Doña Isabella is, are calamities of no ordinary kind. I acknowledge also, that your misfortune is irremediable, as nothing can restore the symmetry of your countenance; but

you will excuse me, señor, if I differ from you, as to the possibility of a just retaliation, such as a caballero and a Castilian might have recourse to."

"Ah, señor," returned Don Juan de Carrara, "would that I could know in what manner this might be accomplished."

"That I will by and by explain," said I; "for unless I am mightily mistaken, my wits already begin to plot something that will deprive Don Manuel of his distinction and his mistress; if my memory rightly serves me, señor, you have said that this Don Manuel is a strict Catholic."

"A most strict Catholic," said Señor de Carrara; "he never misses a mass,—confesses at least once in the week,—and religiously observes all the fasts, and practises all the penances enjoined or recommended by the Catholic church."

“And doubtless,” said I, “entertains a holy awe, and deep respect for the secret tribunal of the Inquisition.”

“Oh! a most profound veneration,” said Don Juan.

“Then,” said I, “you shall be revenged; and to-morrow morning we shall begin our operations: trust in my ingenuity, Señor de Carrara. It now begins to grow late; midnight I think chimes in different quarters of the city; and the sentinels may imagine we are plotting mischief. To-morrow, let us meet on this spot, at the hour of *oracion*; and I shall then be able to communicate the steps, which before that hour I shall have taken towards the completion of my project.” And we accordingly separated: the afflicted caballero turning towards the Calle del Prado, while I directed my steps to the Fontaña de Oro.

Next morning betimes, having, while taking my chocolate, well matured the plan that was to punish Don Manuel; and at the same time afford a substantial, though delicate revenge to Don Juan de Carrara, I bent my steps across the Plazuela de Santo Domingo, towards the Calle de la Inquisicion,—so called, because in it is situated the holy office; and having found in this neighbourhood a house in want of a tenant, I hired it of the owner, and took possession of the key. This was the first step towards my project; the next was, to cause to be carried thither some old articles of furniture, particularly a large table, three great chairs, and a quantity of black cloth—part of which was spread over the table, and part thrown loosely over some old boxes, so effectually concealing them, that the imagination might easily shape them into a rack, or other instrument of torture. These

articles formed the furniture of a large and lofty chamber, the windows of which chanced to be barricaded with massive iron bars. It only remained to provide a few such dresses as are worn by the officers and Familiars of the holy office, which, being chiefly of black, were not difficult to counterfeit; and all was now ready for the execution of the project.

When evening arrived, I did not fail to be punctual to my appointment, which was no less faithfully kept by the unfortunate Don Juan de Carrara, whom I already found, as I expected, waiting my approach.

“ Ah ! señor,” said the caballero, “ I have been all night long dreaming of revenge, and all day longing for the moment of meeting, that I might learn in what manner it is to be carried into effect;” and retiring into the more secluded alleys of the Prado, I explained my project to

Don Juan de Carrara, who could not sufficiently extol the excellence of my invention, or thank me in too extravagant terms for my labours in his behalf.

“Señor de Carrara,” said I, “I perceive that you carry in your bosom a miniature, which I cannot doubt is the miniature of Doña Isabella.”

“It is indeed the portrait of that lady,” replied he; and I then proceeded to explain to Don Juan de Carrara, how greatly it would assist our project if that relic occupied the same place in the bosom of Don Manuel which it now occupied in his; and it was forthwith determined, that the following morning a caballero who was in the confidence of Don Juan, should wait upon his successful rival, and present to him this portrait of Doña Isabella. Every thing promised success to our undertaking; and having finally arranged another meeting for the following evening, we separated.

The hour had now arrived for avenging the injured Juan de Carrara, and for punishing his rival. As I proceeded down the Calle de Atocha, towards the Prado, I met the last of the idlers who had thronged the Paseo; and when I had reached the Puerta de Atocha, all the avenues were hid in deep dusk. Don Juan, and three caballeros, his friends, were waiting at the appointed spot, folded in their ample cloaks, which concealed underneath, the dresses worn by the Familiars of the holy office.

“ All then is ready for the enterprise ? ” said I.

“ We are all prepared,” returned Don Juan de Carrara.

“ And Don Manuel is already in possession of the picture of Doña Isabella ? ”

“ That I can answer for, señor,” said one of the caballeros; “ I carried it to him as the envoy of Don Juan, who, I said, felt that he had no

right to wear it, since he could no longer hope to possess the original. *Dios!* how his eyes sparkled! he hastily snatched it from me; and after devouring it with amorous looks, and covering it with kisses, placed it in his bosom, attaching it to the same chain from which depended an image of the Virgin.”

“Nothing can be more fortunate,” said I; “this will marvellously second our intentions,—and now, señores, ‘t is almost the hour when Don Manuel will leave the house of his mistress; let us hasten forward; but first divest yourselves of your cloaks:” and this being done, accompanied by Don Juan de Carrara, I followed the three caballeros who were attired as Familiars of the Inquisition, up the Calle de Atocha, in which the house of Doña Isabella was situated, and near the entrance to which, we awaited the exit of her lover.

As eleven o'clock chimed from the church of San Sebastian, the gate opened, and Don Manuel was met by the officials of the holy office. He knew too well the duty of a good Catholic, to offer any opposition; but permitting himself to be guided, was conducted towards the Calle de la Inquisicion, at the entrance to which, he was blindfolded, and led into the house, and the room which I had prepared for the execution of the project.

Dressed in the garb of a Grand Inquisitor, I took my seat at the table, while the three Familiars stood by; and Don Juan de Carrara, in a long black cloak, and his face hid in a mask, stood beside the shapeless lumber, which was concealed by an ample covering of black cloth, and which the active imagination of Don Manuel had already doubtless pronounced an engine of torture.

“Don Manuel de Balbas,” said I, in a solemn tone of voice, and assuming a severe expression of countenance, “advance towards the table.”

Don Manuel obeyed, and I continued.

“The holy tribunal before which you stand, condescends in its great lenity, and with a desire to benefit the holy Catholic church, to make known to you the crime of which you stand charged. Don Manuel de Balbas, you are accused in the name of the holy office, of disrespect towards the most blessed Virgin. But you are permitted to confess your crime, and to throw yourself upon the mercy of your judges: answer to the charge, Don Manuel de Balbas.”

Don Manuel, who doubtless imagined himself suspected, though unjustly, by the holy office, and believed that he was within the precincts of the Inquisition, denied in the most solemn manner, the truth of the accusation,—calling all

the saints to witness his innocence, appealing to the well known regularity of his devotions, and concluding even by invoking the Virgin herself.

“Rash and wicked man,” said I, looking yet more sternly upon the accused; “the blessed Virgin to whom thou hast appealed, shall herself bear witness against thee. Be wise, Don Manuel de Balbas,—acknowledge thy crime, and trust in the mercy of this most merciful court. It is always with unwillingness,” added I, glancing significantly towards the supposed instrument of torture, “that we have recourse to harsher means than entreaty. A candid avowal is yet in time to save thee.”

“I am accused,” said Don Manuel “of disrespect to the most blessed Virgin; in which of my actions is this accusation proved?—is it a mark of irreverence, that I have ever carried her

adorable image in my bosom?"—forgetting no doubt at the moment, the company in which she would be found.

"Display then that proof of thy innocence," was the reply; and Don Manuel hastened to draw from his bosom, the chain to which was attached the likeness of the Virgin—and with it, the portrait of Doña Isabella. "This," said he, attempting hastily to detach the latter, "is but —"

"Ah," said I, interrupting him with a pious ejaculation, and crossing myself, "what profanity is this! impious mockery of the blessed Virgin! there needs no farther proof, and confession would now be useless, and denial vain. The hour of grace is past. A crime like this,—not disrespect, but insult to the *Virgin Santa, purisima, y sin pecado concebida*, might justly be punished by perpetual imprisonment in the dungeons

of the holy tribunal; but we are merciful, Don Manuel de Balbas,—the court is merciful and lenient, and will but enjoin such penances and mortifications as a regard for the offended honour of the Catholic church, and the reformation of a wandering son require.”

At these words, I could perceive that the spirits of Don Manuel partly recovered from the terrors which had been awakened by the discovery of the portrait of Doña Isabella; anticipating, probably, a few fasts, and some additional avés. But, as will presently appear, he had small cause for congratulation.

“ Don Manuel de Balbas,” said I, “ we, who appear to be here separated from the world, are not ignorant of what passes within it. We are acquainted, not only with the backslidings of those whom we summon before us, but of their history, and causes;—we are

not ignorant that you have long valued yourself upon those personal advantages in which you have yourself no merit, and which have contributed to delude and lead you into the crime of which you have been judged guilty. This vanity must be mortified."

Here I paused a moment, that I might mark the effect of my words upon Don Manuel: it was easy to see that all his terrors had revived; he doubtless imagined that some fearful disfigurement was about to take place; and the glance which I directed towards Don Juan de Carrara, who, at the same time, lifted up a part of the black cloth that covered the supposed apparatus of punishment, no doubt confirmed the culprit in his fears. I then proceeded as follows:

"To this end, the holy office enjoins the following penances and mortifications:—*First*,

That head of hair, those dark crisped locks, in which, foolish man, you doubtless pride yourself, must be close shaved, and kept in a state of perfect baldness, unaided by any artificial covering, during the space of five years,— (at this announcement, Don Manuel groaned audibly)—“ and you shall now swear upon the four gospels, that you will observe religiously this penance.”

Don Manuel knew well, that resistance to the awards of the holy tribunal was vain; and believing that the penance enjoined was the condition of exemption from the rack, and the price of freedom from the dungeons of the Inquisition, he had no alternative but to take the oath.

“ Let this first part of the judgment of the tribunal be instantly carried into effect,” said I; and Don Manuel was immediately con-

ducted into an adjoining apartment, where one accustomed to this office was in waiting, purposely brought from the neighbouring village, under an oath of secrecy, administered, as he believed, by the holy tribunal.

It was no doubt a sweet moment to Don Juan de Carrara, when the rival to whom he owed all his misfortunes was again placed at the table, bald, browless, and inexpressive;—for my own part, I could not have recognised the handsome caballero who issued from the gate of Doña Isabella.

“Don Manuel de Balbas,” said I, “listen to the decree of the holy tribunal, which is now about to proceed in its judgment. As a farther mortification, it is enjoined, that during the same period of five years, the opprobrium of a negro, in place of the honourable distinction of a Castilian, shall be yours. Familiars,

withdraw with the accused, and let his face, neck, and hands, be died black."

Don Manuel then withdrew, and shortly reappeared—a bald negro!

Certes, thought I, as the caballero was a second time placed at the table, Doña Isabella must be blind with love indeed, if Don Manuel still retain his position.

"Don Manuel de Balbas," said I, "the holy tribunal, in its great lenity, is contented: the judgment delivered is not indeed in proportion with the enormity of your crime; but we trust it may prove a salutary mortification of the pride that has led to it. Remember, Don Manuel, that the holy office never loses sight of those who have once been accused; remember, that its decrees are never violated with impunity; and that a neglect, or violation, or evasion, of the mortifications enjoined for the

space of time specified, will be followed by immediate and severe punishment in this world; and by the anger of heaven, where thy oath has been ratified. Familiars, re-conduct Don Manuel de Balbas from the precincts of the Inquisition.” And Don Manuel being again blindfolded, was led from the hall of justice.

“ Ah, señor,” said Don Juan de Carrara, throwing aside his mantle and his mask, and running to embrace me, “ this is indeed a delicate, and yet a substantial revenge. Doña Isabella will doubtless receive Don Manuel in the same manner that she received me. I am curious to know what reason he will assign for his change of complexion. All Madrid will know it to-morrow.”

“ And Don Vincente,” said I, “ will be forced to seek another husband for Doña Isabella.”

Our project being now completed, we extinguished the lights, and leaving the house, proceeded to the Fontaña de Oro; where, over some choice bottles of val de peñas, we laughed heartily at the metamorphosis and just punishment of the caballero; and congratulated ourselves upon the happy execution of our design.

Next day, as Don Juan had predicted, the singular change that had taken place in the appearance of the Prince of Caballeros was known all over Madrid; bound by the oath which he had taken, and well knowing that secresy regarding all that concerns the holy office is an obligation, any infringement of which is instantly visited by its anger, Don Manuel gave out that the change in his complexion, and the baldness of his head, were voluntary penances. One half of the town laughed at him for a fool and a bigot; and the

other half decided that he had lost his reason; while every caballero with two eyes, a Castilian complexion, and imposing mustachios, began to form pretensions to the hand of Doña Isabella, and to the post of honour that was first occupied by Don Juan de Carrara, and then by his rival. Don Manuel endeavoured to convince Don Vincente and his charming daughter, that he was still entitled to be preferred, notwithstanding the metamorphosis that had taken place—since it was in his own option to renew his hair and restore his colour; but Don Vincente, it is said, only saw in this reasoning, a proof of his insanity; while Doña Isabella declared, that rather than wed a caballero who had voluntarily subjected himself to a penance that risked the loss of her favour, she would retire into a convent.

Some little time after these events, when

walking one evening up the Calle de Alcala, I was suddenly accosted by the well-remembered voice of Don Juan de Carrara. “ Ah, señor,” said he, “ give me joy of my good fortune,—to you I am indebted for it all.”

“ How, señor de Carrara,” said I,—“ am I to understand that you have recovered your mistress !”

“ Even so,” said he. “ Don Vincente, finding an insurmountable difficulty in keeping his vow, owing to the number of caballeros who took the field, applied to the Archbishop to absolve him from so troublesome an oath,—to which his highness consented. He then sounded the inclinations of Doña Isabella, who avowed, that she had never altogether forgotten her first lover; and that although she shrieked when he presented himself before her, this was more owing to surprise than aversion.”

“ And, in short,” said I, interrupting my friend, “ Don Vincente consents that Doña Isabella shall please herself, although her taste leads her to select an amante with only one eye.”

“ Nearly so,” replied Don Juan; “ but before granting his consent, Don Vincente, whose admiration of beauty remains unabated, consulted the well known physician Lorenzana, who assured him, that notwithstanding the one eye and disfigured cheek of his son-in-law, he might be the grandsire of a race of beautiful Castilians. This removed the only remaining scruple of Don Vincente, and Doña Isabella will to-morrow bestow her hand upon me.”

I was pleased to think that my endeavours had thus unexpectedly served the cause of Don Juan de Carrara, who appeared to be deserving of his good fortune; and a few days after his marriage, I presented myself at his first ter-

tulia. Doña Isabella, I found all that he had represented her to be; and the caballero, her husband, even notwithstanding his recent and nearly fatal misfortune, might have put in some claim to personal distinction: he had not, indeed, recovered his lost eye, but the scar and its effects were little perceptible; and a cunning artificer had supplied other deficiences; and his noble carriage and faultless shape, and, above all, the evident partiality which he bore towards his wife, doubtless more than made up in the mind of Doña Isabella, for the effects of Don Manuel's cruel revenge.

The following morning, sauntering slowly up the Calle de Montera, with the air of one whose time hangs somewhat heavy on his hands, I was accosted by a caballero, dressed in a suit that appeared to have seen better days, who, with a courteous salutation, begged a moment's attention.

“ Señor,” said he, “ I perceive that I have the honour to address a stranger,—one whose only business is recreation, and who seeks, among the other objects of attraction with which this city overflows, to regale his eyes with the great productions of the divine art for which Spain has always been remarkable.”

“ Señor,” said I, in reply, “ it is indeed true that I am a stranger, and one whose business is recreation ; but as for the art of which you speak, I have had little leisure, and but scanty opportunity of cultivating an acquaintance with it.”

“ Ah, then, señor,” said the caballero, “ both are now at our disposal: please to accompany me to my house, which is hard by, and where all the glories of painting are exhibited to the eye of taste ;”—and without waiting for a reply, the caballero, with another inviting salutation,

led the way, while I, without feeling any great interest in the promises of my companion, followed him up the Calle de Montera, and past the church of San Luis, at a door near to which he entered, and ascended a long winding stair.

“Señor,” said he, “I have no occasion to make any excuses for the trouble of ascending my stairs; what you will presently see will repay it; and moreover, the first grandes,—nobles of all ranks,—duquesas too,—marquesas—and most of the noble ladies of this city, have preceded your grace:” and so saying, the caballero threw open a door, and ushered me into a tolerably large room, the walls of which were in all parts covered with pictures.

Though not greatly conversant with the intricacies of the art, I could speedily perceive that the greater number of the pictures were hasty sketches, in imitation of the early produc-

tions of the great masters ; and guessed that my companion was one of those needy, but clever artists, who pick up a tolerable living by imposing on the credulity of strangers.

“ This gallery, señor,” said the caballero, “ could not be examined as it deserves within less than a life-time: I consider myself the most fortunate of men, to have already formed a collection for which any prince in Europe would pawn his crown. Here, you perceive, are Murillos without end; and wherever there is a Murillo, I have placed a Velasquez by his side. There is no indifferent picture here, señor,—Murillo and Velasquez will bear nothing in their mighty presence less than Cano and Juanes, and Cirillo and Morales, and Españoletto. Between you and me, señor, the sovereigns of Europe are not deserving of fine pictures ; they are lost, absolutely lost, in the crowd,—and insulted, by

being placed among daubs. My pictures, señor,—that is, such as I can spare,—shall find their way only into private galleries,—select galleries,—such as that which no doubt you, señor, possess in your castle in Andalusia; for I perceive, by your charming dress, as well as by the softness of dialect, that I have the honour to converse with a caballero, or most probably, a noble, of that province."

"Señor," said I, "I admire the love of the art which you have just expressed, and applaud the resolution to dispose worthily of your pictures; nor have I any objection to become the possessor of a Murillo, from the hand of so skilful an imitator."

"I perceive, señor," replied my companion, with a smile, "that I have not been so fortunate as to fall in company with a novice in the art. And perhaps, señor, it is a higher praise

to be the skilful imitator of the great masters, than to possess their works. My profession is, I perceive, known to your grace ; at whose disposal I place my Murillos, and Canos, and Españolettos : the prices, señor, are low ; so that I am almost ashamed to name them to a caballero of your consideration ; but they remunerate me for the time bestowed. I sketch off a Murillo before breakfast,—and hit a Velasquez to the life between my siesta and my promenade : as for Espanoletto, a rough sketch is completed while I sip a cup of chocolate ;—Cano and Morales demand more finish ; and for these my prices are somewhat higher : in fact, señor—” But the colloquy was suddenly interrupted by an exclamation of astonishment and delight, that suspended the explanations of the caballero.

While the sketcher of Murillo and Velasquez

had been speaking, my eyes had continued to wander over the pictures before me,— and, “Santa Maria!” said I, “what is this?” as they fell upon the well-remembered countenance of Violante. “Tell me, I beseech thee, señor, how came this into thy possession, or where hast thou seen the original?”

“Your grace,” replied the caballero, “seems to be interested in the sketch,— and well may any noble. Believe me, señor, the lady whom it represents has charms far surpassing those which my admiration of them has urged me to portray. For but a trifling sum, señor, I will—”

“Yes, yes;” said I, interrupting the painter, “I will give whatever is demanded; but tell me, without delay, the history of this picture,— the original, then, is not unknown to thee?”

“No, señor,” replied he; “I myself sketched this portrait.”

“But when? how, señor?”

“ Scarce a week ago,” replied he, “ crossing the Puerta del Sol, on my way to the Paseo, I perceived a señora and a caballero; and noting them for strangers, I made bold to address them, as I did you, señor, this day. They followed me hither; and while they admired my gallery, I took an opportunity of etching the countenance of the señora,—for you must know, señor, I am like all my countrymen, not indifferent to the charms of the fair sex,—though, if report speak true, the natives of your southern provinces are yet more gallantly inclined than even we Castilians. She was indeed a charming lady, señor; and if I mistake not, a native of Andalusia.”

“ And the caballero?” demanded I, with some eagerness; “ was he the husband, the amante, or the cortego of the señora ? ”

“ Alas, señor,” replied he, “ it is impossible for me to reply with certainty to these matters ;

for to say the truth, I was so much occupied with the charms of the lady, that I had neither opportunity nor inclination to bestow much attention upon the caballero who attended her; but as to the probability of his being the husband, the amante, or the cortego of the señora, I think, señor, I can set your mind at rest on that point, and say, without difficulty, that he was more likely to be the amante, or cortego, than the husband of the lady; for it did not escape my notice, that he pressed upon her acceptance whatever thing she appeared to fancy,—a courtesy, señor, which was not likely to have happened, if the señora had been the wife of the caballero.”

“ Señor,” said I, “ this has been a fortunate meeting; I am the purchaser of the picture,”—and putting into his hand the sum demanded, I left the artist and his gallery, and descended

into the street, turning every way in my mind, as I returned to the Fontaña de Oro, the singular event that had just occurred. Nothing more could be gathered from it, than that Violante was then, or at least had lately been, in Madrid; but this conclusion, vague and unsatisfactory as it was, proved sufficient to unsettle all my plans, and to excite my curiosity and interest to the utmost pitch. Whether Violante was married, or was still that which her old guardian had congratulated her upon being; a lady with all the privileges of marriage, and all the advantages of señorita, no way appeared from the narrative of the painter; for, although I well understood the justice of the conclusion, that a caballero was not likely to be the husband of her upon whom he lavished his doblons,—but that this was rather to be expected from an amante, or a cortego,—the

conclusion might not be applicable to Violante, who, I felt persuaded, would not bestow herself upon one for whom she did not feel the truest affection, and whose charms of mind and person might well secure the gallantry of an amante, along with the duties of a husband.

It was enough for me, however, that Violante was in Madrid: I hastened to the Fonda, to undo my preparations for leaving that capital—my thoughts were never an instant away from Violante—her charming countenance was always before me—my constant object was, to discover her—upon that my mind was wholly bent, and in my endeavours at success every moment of my time was occupied. I again went the round of diversions; walked the streets from morning till night; rose with the sun, to attend mass in one or other of the churches, till I had made the round of them all; and kept two or three

ragamuffins in my pay, to be my scouts in all directions. There was not a street in Madrid that I did not perambulate a hundred times—I looked in the face of every one I met—I mingled again in the crowds that thronged the streets and the Prado; and every where scrutinized like an inquisitor.

It must not be supposed from all this, that I had suddenly become passionately enamoured of Violante. Whoever has perused the memoirs of my life since I left my native town, must have discovered that I am not of a very susceptible nature. Gallantry forms the chief business of an Andalusian's life; and it has no doubt formed some episodes in mine: but the absolute tyranny of love, such as I read of in the confession of Paulo,—and myself saw, in Gaston and Paulina, had never yet asserted its power over me; and since I had not, even when daily

in the neighbourhood of Violante, been assailed by that passion, it is not likely that the casual glance at a drawing of her countenance should suddenly convert me into an *enamorado*. I remembered Violante as the most charming specimen of her sex; I had not forgotten the blush that overspread her neck on her bridal morning; the beautiful little feet that peeped from under her wedding robe; nor the smile with which she thanked me for my services,—nor the tears, with which she bewailed the untimely fate of her new-made husband. All these recollections were renewed by the glimpse of her likeness,—and it was most natural that along with these, I should remember also that she was the sole heiress of as much wealth as any reasonable man could desire to find united to such a multitude of charms; and that so many agreeable, as well as weighty consider-

ations, should lead to the conclusion, that as it was my firm resolution to settle in the world, and if possible, to better my fortune by the step, it was useless to run any longer about the world in quest of fortune, if this, as well as beauty and virtue, could be found united in so charming a partner as Violante. These, I think, will be admitted to be sufficient reasons for my pursuit, and for the time and labour I bestowed upon it; and excuse all the impertinences which it forced me to commit,—without making it necessary to suppose that I was transformed into an *enfermedad amoroso*.*

Days and weeks had now elapsed, and my pursuit seemed to be hopeless: I felt assured that Violante was no longer in Madrid; and began to console myself with the belief, that she was married; and that therefore my pursuit,

* Love-sick swain.

if successful, could only have ended in disappointment. I at length resolved to quit the metropolis,—and waited only one day longer, that I might have an opportunity of seeing some Arragonese bulls at the *Corrida*, which were to be encountered by a celebrated *matador* from Cordova.

I took my place in the lower tier of seats, among the *Pueblo baxo*, that I might the better see a fight which excited so much interest, owing both to the excellence of the bulls, and the great reputation of the matador, who appeared upon this occasion for the first time in the metropolis.

Three savage bulls, after being wounded by the *picadores*, and irritated by the *banderilleros*, were despatched by the matador; but the fourth united wariness with strength and ferocity. The matador advanced—offered his cloak—and suc-

ceeded in fixing his sword in its neck,—the animal staggered, and knelt down,—and the matador approached, to push the sword deeper, and terminate the victory: but the bull, suddenly springing to his feet, tossed the matador in the air, and paused, to catch him as he fell.

It was at this moment that, as usual, the whole multitude, round and round the amphitheatre, rose from their seats and bent forward; and, as at such times I was always accustomed to run my eye over the rows of faces in search of Violante, I turned my back upon the matador and the bull, and began to scan the countenances of the spectators.

“ At length,” said I, “ I have found thee then ! and when I least expected it,”—as my eye rested upon the well-remembered features of Violante. The blood rushed from my heart to my face; but it quickly forsook my cheeks,

and left them pale as death, as I observed another countenance close to hers. “Great God!” said I, “what is it that I see? I must be deceived,—it cannot—cannot be! and yet, it is—it is the face of Ramirez, her husband.”

No words can describe the amazement,—and the strange emotions that filled me, at this most miraculous discovery. He whom I had seen, as I imagined, poisoned,—whom I had left, as I believed, dead in his chair,—and whose untimely fate I had so often lamented, sat before my eyes, by the side of Violante! There was but one explanation. Ramirez had recovered, and Violante had lamented without cause; but along with this explanation, an unpleasant recollection obtruded itself upon me. I had killed Alonzo—and had never looked upon this deed in any other light, than as a just punishment for the crime of which he had been guilty, and which

he had doubtless meditated against all who partook of the feast; but by this discovery a new turn was given to the affair. Ramirez was not poisoned; and therefore, I had punished the jealous artist for a crime which he did not commit. Such thoughts passed rapidly through my mind,—but they again gave place to the wonder, as well as the pleasure which I felt, as I continued to gaze upon the countenances of those whose union had been brought about by my contrivance and services. I may do myself the justice to say, that at this moment no selfish feeling entered my mind; and that my joy at finding my poor friend, to whom I was so much indebted, actually in the land of the living, was noways damped by the discovery which was made at the same time,—that the caballero who had pressed Violante to spend money, was indeed her husband. “Well, well,” said I, mentally, “they are deserving of each other.”

Before the Corrida had concluded, I perceived that Violante and her husband had been as keen sighted as myself; and although at a considerable distance from them, I had no difficulty in perceiving that their pleasure, as well as surprise, were scarcely exceeded by my own; and the meeting which soon afterwards took place, was such as might be expected between persons who never thought to see each other in this world again; and one of whom was indebted to the other for a charming wife and a rich inheritance, and possibly, for life itself.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

IN WHICH THIS HISTORY FOLLOWS THE EXAMPLE OF ALL
COMMENDABLE HISTORIES, IN SHOWING THAT VICE IS
PUNISHED AND VIRTUE REWARDED.

“ You may easily believe,” said I, to the husband of Violante, when, after having finished our well-spiced chocolate, we drew our chairs near to the balcony that looked into the Plaza Mayor, “ how curious I am to hear the history of your resurrection, as well as the other events that followed the scene in which I was so important an actor: my curiosity will not bear a delay till morning; and I think we cannot find a fitter time than now, while supper is preparing.”

“ I am of opinion,” said Ramirez, “ that the narrative will come with more propriety from Violante than from me; for I am a stranger to all that took place from the commencement of the feast, until I opened my eyes upon my sweet wife, who bent weeping over me. Come, Violante,” said he, “ give Don Pedro a full history, and do not be ashamed to tell how thou didst bewail thy poor poisoned husband.” And Violante saying, with a sweet smile, that it was somewhat of a painful task we had exacted of her, since it must renew so many agonizing recollections, spoke in the following manner.

“ Scarcely,” said she, “ had you quitted the scene, when Señor Felipe entered the room, accompanied by several officers of justice, for the purpose, no doubt, of making prisoner of you; and when they perceived that you were

no longer in their power, they immediately sallied out in quest of you, and left things in the same condition in which you remember them to have been when you made your escape. My husband, and my cousin Alonso, lying insensible in their chairs ; my guardian in an agony of fear ; and myself, weeping over my husband, who I had no doubt was lost to me for ever.

“Things remained in this state for some time ; till, while gazing upon my husband’s face, to my unutterable amazement, and inconceivable joy, he opened his eyes, and the next moment was able to pronounce my name. There is no occasion for me to relate, in how extravagant a manner I showed my joy ; it is enough to say, that when we had sufficiently expressed our mutual pleasure, we began for the first time to cast our eyes upon the scene around, and upon my cousin Alonso, who, to all appearance, had

expiated the crime which he meditated. Ramirez, my husband, was ignorant of all that had taken place ; but by the explanations which I made, he was speedily convinced of the truth of what you suspected, and made no doubt, that Alonso had meditated the destruction of all—excepting me,—that he might become possessed of that which he prized more than myself—my inheritance.”

“ While we remained uncertain in what way to dispose of Alonso, who might possibly recover his consciousness as my husband had done, the officers of justice, accompanied by the alcalde, entered the room,—and to them we immediately gave a true relation of all that had taken place ; and informed the alcalde of the suspicions which we had too much reason for entertaining, as to the intentions of Alonso ; and he, for reasons which will soon appear, carried my cousin, in the state in which he then was, to prison.

“ There were now only left, my guardian, my husband, and myself. My guardian did what he could to collect the scattered remnants of the feast, to which he again applied himself with relish—eating, however, only of the dish which he had himself contributed. As for Ramirez and myself, we were too deeply impressed with the extraordinary events that had taken place, to be able to withdraw our minds from them for a moment; and nothing that had happened gave us so much concern, as the danger into which your zeal had probably led you,—and the loss which we felt in the want of your society,—for it was to you that we owed all; it was your ingenious contrivance that had brought us together; and there can be little doubt, that but for your penetration into the plot that was laid, and your speedy retaliation upon Alonso, he would have triumphed over us all.

“ It was some hours after this, that we were surprised by a visit from the alcalde—who told us, that when he had removed Alonso to prison, he had ordered every means to be used for his recovery,—not, as he said, for his sake, but for the ends of justice.

“ ‘ It was not long,’ said the alcalde, ‘ before he showed some signs of consciousness—’ ”

“ Ah ! ” said I, interrupting Violante in her narrative, “ thank God ! — Alonso then recovered,— and I am guiltless of having taken his life ! ”

“ Have patience,” said Violante, “ and you shall know all; but even if the event had been otherwise, you could not have had much cause for self accusation, in having killed one who meditated killing you. But to proceed with my narrative :— I had just told you how the alcalde said, that it was not long before Alonso showed

signs of consciousness,—‘and soon,’ said the alcalde, ‘he opened his eyes, and sat up. Now I thought, was the time to make an impression upon his mind, and to extort a confession of the truth. I told him, accordingly, that his crime was well known; that he had succeeded in poisoning most of those who sat at the banquet; and that as he could have no hope of mercy in this world, it was incumbent upon him to make a confession and thus do something towards an atonement.’ And the alcalde then put into my hand the confession made by Alonso,—which contained a full admission of his intended crime, and implicated Felipe in his guilt, who was to have shared with him the fortune of his cousin Violante.

“ In the meanwhile, Felipe, who believed that Alonso was dead—and that, therefore, no one could witness against him—had returned to

Cadiz, with the intention of claiming my hand: and no doubt, feeling but little regret that the plot had gone farther than was intended,—and had taken effect, as he thought, upon Alonzo, the contriver of it, and had thus left him sole claimant to his cousin,—or rather, to her inheritance; and it was not until he had been conducted to prison, that he was informed at the same time, of the recovery of Ramirez and Alonso, and of the confession by which he was accused of the meditated wickedness. Alonso and Felipe were both possessed of considerable sums of money; and by the sacrifice of one half of their fortunes to the escrivanos and judges, their punishment was changed from death, to exile in Ceuta. The remaining half of their fortunes they bequeathed to my husband, as some compensation for the injury which they had plotted against him. Alas!” added Violante,

“it deeply grieves me to think of the fate of my kinsmen. It is true, I never loved nor greatly esteemed them, and God knows the little cause I have had to do either the one or the other ; and it is too true, that the dreadful wickedness they meditated does not entitle them to much compassion : yet all this evil has come upon upon them owing to my inheritance. Happy are they who have only their virtues, or their charms to recommend them !

“ Soon after these events, my worthy guardian fell sick and died ; and so many disagreeable recollections being associated with Cadiz, we resolved to leave it, and settle in some other part of Spain ; and in the meantime, to visit the metropolis,—which we happily accomplished ; since otherwise, we might never more have seen one to whom we are indebted for all.”

“ And otherwise too,” said Ramirez, “ the

five thousand pistoles might have remained for ever in the hands of Don Martin de Caromera."

"Of what five thousand pistoles do you speak?" demanded I.

"Of five thousand pistoles which are your property," said Ramirez. "When the half of the fortunes of Alonzo and Felipe came into my possession, Violante said, 'Our coffers are sufficiently full; no one has so good a right to this gold as Don Pedro, whose life was equally threatened with yours—who is, perhaps, now suffering much upon our account; and to whom we doubtless owe all that we possess, and all that we enjoy. And I need scarcely say, that I made no hesitation in seconding the proposal of my dear Violante,—instantly placing the five thousand pistoles in the hands of the rich merchant Don Martin de Caromera; there to lie on your ac-

count, in case we should ever have the happiness to discover you."

I ventured to protest against this generosity ; but Violante and her husband assured me it was nothing more than justice. " But for your ingenuity," said Ramirez, " Violante would now have been the wife of one or other of those men who were capable of plotting the most detestable of crimes ; and as for me,—to say nothing of being by your means the husband of Violante,— I would have been but for you, a starving artist, in place of sharing with Violante one of the richest inheritances in Andalusia." And so five thousand pistoles were added to my fortune.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

BEING THE ONLY CHAPTER IN WHICH THIS HISTORY MAKES
NO PROGRESS.

IT was some days after the incidents recorded in the foregoing chapter, and when I had related to Ramirez and Violante the events which had taken place since I parted from them at Cadiz, that the following conversation took place between Ramirez and myself:—

“I should imagine,” said Ramirez, “that thou must by this time be nearly sick of adventures; and that if thou couldst light upon such another prize as my Violante, thou wouldest be inclined to settle for life.”

“ I fear,” returned I, “ that one may hover long enough without having the good fortune to light upon such another. I do not speak of her inheritance, but of her virtues and her charms: but to confess the truth, I have of late felt something like that of which you have spoken. The world can scarcely shew me much more than I have seen, or offer me many more enjoyments than I have helped myself to. And although it be true, that fortune, or contrivance, or both together, have hitherto extricated me from my greatest difficulties, and sent me away with a heavier purse besides,—the unsuccessful issue of the next adventure, or one turn of ill fortune, might rob me of the fruits of years, and leave me to begin the world anew.”

“ True, my friend,” said Ramirez, “ and spoken like a philosopher: fortune is not to be always confided in; and as she never remains

true to the end, he is a wise man who picks the first quarrel, and turns his back upon her in good time: quarrel with her, Pedro,—or depend upon it, she 'll quarrel with thee.”

“ And yet,” said I, “ you will admit, that courage and contrivance have sometimes stood more my friend than fortune,—and these, at least, are not likely to fail me.”

“ It is natural,” returned Ramirez, “ that thou shouldst not be disposed to give all the credit to fortune; and nevertheless, I suspect that there are few cases in which success is achieved without her helping hand.”

“ It was courage—was it not,” said I, “ that freed me from the tyranny of Andrades?”

“ And yet,” replied Ramirez, “ courage would have been of no avail, if the hilt of his sabre had not been within thy reach !”

“ You will admit then,” said I, “ that con-

trivance extricated me from the tower of Tarifa!"

"Fortune had a hand there too," said Ramirez; "for if the bishop, the alcalde, and the friar, had been braver men, or less superstitious, your contrivance would have availed nothing. They would have put the dead woman in her coffin, and the ghost in irons."

"You cannot deny however," said I, "that I am indebted solely to my courage for my victory over the smugglers in the mystico, and for my consequent inheritance!"

"On the contrary," returned my friend, "thou hast been in nothing so much indebted to fortune: if thou hadst not been warned of thy danger by Paulo; if the one smuggler had not chanced to turn his back, and if the other had not fallen upon his face, thou wouldest have been thrown into the sea. If Paulo had died in the

mystico, how could it ever have been steered into port,—or if he had not died at all; thou couldst never have been his heir: so that it is plain, my friend, we are more indebted to fortune than we suppose, even where we are the most confident that the merit lies with ourselves.”

“I confess I had never imagined,” said I, “that I had been so largely indebted to fortune; but this discovery gives more weight to your opinion; and inclines me more and more to think seriously of being an adventurer no longer; but to do what I am able, in order to find another Doña Violante. But alas! my dear friend, such prizes are rare,—charms like hers, are confined to few, and virtue like hers to still fewer.”

“And yet,” said Ramirez, “I have seen one, of whose charms and graces any other than Violante might be envious.”

“ Not, I imagine, in Castile,” said I. “ You will admit that my employment in the service of the beautiful Marquesa of Cadiz, gave me some title to be a judge in those matters; and if you have not, since coming to Madrid, found your Violante more charming after every turn on the Paseo; I can only say, that you have been more fortunate than I have.”

“ I have not said,” returned Ramirez, “ that this rival of my Violante is a Castilian; but that I may introduce her with proper effect, I must be somewhat tedious in my narrative. When Violante just now related all that took place since you parted from us at Cadiz, she gave no account of our journey from Cadiz hither. Now, you must know, that as we had resolved to settle in some other place than Cadiz, we made diligent inquiries as we travelled between Seville and Cordova—which is, without doubt,

the most agreeable part of Andalusia—whether any lands were to be sold in that quarter; and learning, as we journeyed up the bank of the Guadalquivir, that the señorío of the village of Penaflor, along with other lands in the neighbourhood, might be purchased—”

“ What ! ” said I, “ the village of Penaflor—Penaflor in Andalusia, on the right bank of the river ? ”

“ The same, ” said Ramirez.

“ ’T is my native village ! ” said I. “ Ah ! sweet Penaflor ! scene of my youthful wanderings, and early exploits; village, almost of my regrets ;—thou hast touched a chord, Ramirez, that I thought had been dumb. But proceed, my friend, your narrative has now tenfold interest for me.”

“ Well, ” continued Ramirez, “ having learned that the señorío of Penaflor might be purchased,

we left the road and journeyed thither; and we found the fact to be as had been reported to us. Violante was charmed with Penaflor—”

“ Nobody could be otherwise than charmed with it,” interrupted I; “ I have never seen the spot to equal it.”

“ ’T is indeed a charming spot,” continued Ramirez: “ how majestically the wide river sweeps past that hill that juts into it, covered with Indian fig; and how sweetly lies that house beneath, half embowered in its orange grove.”

“ Ah! my friend,” said I, “ pardon me for again interrupting thee in thy narrative; that is my father’s house,—would that I could know if the old man be yet living.”

“ The owner of that house,” said Ramirez, “ is a young female, who inherits it of the last owner: but let me continue my narrative,—and in time thou shalt hear all that I have to tell.

When I found that Violante was pleased with the situation of Penaflor, I entered into a treaty for the purchase of the señorío, which I found included the greater part of the neighbourhood, excepting the house which you say was your father's, and the land which was attached to it."

"He was always proud of that exception," said I.

"'T was that exception," continued Ramirez, "that prevented me from purchasing the señorío, as you shall hear. Don Felix de Carmona, the last lord of Penaflor, never resided at his lordship; and therefore, as you probably know, there was no house upon the señorío. Violante had set her affections upon the house we have been speaking of; and we inquired in the village, who it was that inhabited it, and whether it might not be purchased? They informed us, that the last owner had died six months before."

“ His name ? ” said I.

“ He could not have been thy father, Pedro, for his name was Señor de Segura.”

“ He was, indeed, my father,” said I: “ thou hast known me but as Pedro ; but my name and the name of my father is Pedro de Segura. Well,—heaven rest his soul ! he never gave me much cause to love him ; but I shall at least be dutiful now that he is dead, and give a portion of my inheritance to purchase masses.”

“ I fear,” said Ramirez, “ the inheritance has not fallen to thee,—but listen. They told me, that when Señor de Segura fell sick, he was waited upon with great affection by the daughter of a neighbour, who tended him during his illness, and treated him with the same kindness as if he had been her own father ; and that he, having no children—for so at least, they said at Penaflor—thought fit to reward her care, by

making her the heiress of all that he possessed."

"The intelligence is most singular," said I, "and not altogether so agreeable as I could have desired."

"No doubt," said Ramirez, "you figure to yourself some ancient and plain-featured maid in possession of your inheritance; who, for self interest, tended your father—made his chocolate—mixed his olla—cut his melon—put the wine-skin to his mouth—prepared his drugs; and in the end, led him to disinherit you; and you are without doubt of opinion, that nothing could be more agreeable to you, than to turn this intruder out of doors. But believe me, friend Pedro, you will find it more agreeable to share your inheritance with her; and if fortune will but once more stand your friend, I would advise you to return to Penaflor, and attempt

in this way the recovery of your inheritance: and now be all attention to what follows:—

“ The heiress of your possessions did not live in the house to which she had fallen heir, but still continued in the house of her father; and thither I repaired with Violante. I do protest, Pedro, that no one excepting the husband of Violante, could have done otherwise than fall upon his knees before so exquisite a creature: such symmetry of form,—such faultlessness of countenance,—so much grace! When we had made known to her the object of our visit, she expressed herself as nearly as I can recollect, in the following terms:—

“ ‘ Señor de Segura had once a son (little did I imagine that this son was my friend Don Pedro); four years ago, he left his father’s house, as he said, to push his fortune; and the day before he set out, he gave to me this token

(a small silver cross); at the same time telling me, that before five years elapsed he would return and claim it. I was then little more than a child, scarcely sixteen; but,' said she, blushing, and casting down her eyes; 'I was old enough to affix a meaning to the pledge.

“‘ When Señor de Segura’s son had left his village, I could not bear to see the old man solitary; for although he had never been a good father, he seemed to feel the loss of his son; and as our vineyard joined his olive ground, I sometimes assisted in gathering in his olives. It was not long before he declined in health, and became infirm; and with my father’s permission, I did what little I could, to make his last days comfortable. He said he knew he had been a harsh father,—and forgave his son’s desertion of him: and God, he said, had provided me in his stead; but it was not until he had received the

last offices of religion, that I knew he had left his son's inheritance to me. The possession which you are desirous of purchasing, belongs not to me, but to the son of Señor de Segura. I know not whether he be living or dead: doubtless he has long since forgotten the promise he made, as well as her to whom he made it; but if he be living, it is possible he may some day remember Penaflor; and what would be his opinion of me, if, when he returned, he found that I had sold his inheritance!' It was in this manner, Pedro, that Federica,—for such was her name,—refused to part with your father's possessions; and I could not help saying to Violante, as we said *à Dios!* to this angelic creature, 'If this son of Señor de Segura but knew what good fortune awaits him here, he would soon cease to search for it elsewhere.' ”

Such was the narrative of my friend Ramirez ; and although I had permitted him to arrive at the name of Federica without interruption, he had not proceeded a great way in his narration, before I knew who it was that had fallen heir to my inheritance ; for I had not forgotten the silver cross, and the promise I had made.

The reader must not be surprised that a disclosure of this kind should come upon him unawares. The memoirs which I have written, profess no more than to record my adventures since I quitted Penaflor, and have nothing to do with my life and doings before I entered upon the world ; and although I have related, that upon the morning when I left my native town, and looked back upon Penaflor, I gave a sigh, and an adieu, to Federica—“ the handsome Federica ! ”—I did not think it necessary to record, that the night before I danced a bolero with her

by the river side, and sauntered in the olive grove with her until the moon was up; and told her to keep the silver cross I gave her, for my sake,—for that next morning I should leave Penaflor, to seek my fortune; and in five years would return, to claim my pledge as a proof of her constancy; and that Federica entreated me not to go, and dropped a tear upon my cheek. All this had nothing to do with my adventures, and therefore needed not to be told: but now that Ramirez has made the present disclosure, and introduced Federica to the reader, I am constrained to admit that all she said was true,---and what Andalusian is there, who has reached the age of nineteen without having found a *maja*? And when Ramirez had made an end of his narrative, I said, “Pray repeat to me again, all that Federica said;” and when he had complied with my request, he added,—“I assure thee,

friend Pedro, that were I not the happy husband of Violante, there is no one I should envy so much as yourself; for a more charming patrimony than yours, or a more enchanting mistress of it, is not to be found in Andalusia. Thou wouldst indeed deserve a turn of ill-fortune, if, after this, thou shouldst think of more adventures, or of pushing thy fortune farther: what adventure can be half so agreeable, or profitable, as returning to Penaflor, with the prospect of stepping into thy inheritance, with no incumbrance upon it, but the most charming señorita in Andalusia?" And finding that in the advice of Ramirez, I had sufficient matter for thought, I took leave of my friend for the present.

CHAPTER XXXV.

IN WHICH I CONCLUDE MY MEMOIRS, IN A MANNER
ENTIRELY SATISFACTORY TO THE READER.

WHEN I found myself alone, I discovered that the conversation which I had held with Ramirez, and in particular, the part which Federica bore in his narrative, had wrought no small alteration in my feelings. My mind reverted to early days,—Penaflor and its inhabitants. I remembered the rough features, and ungracious manners of my father; and the buffetings his hand had dealt: and if I did not feel in consequence any very great affection for his memory, I nevertheless regretted that I had not received his

blessing,—and I repeated the vow I had made, to inquire of his confessor into the state of his soul, and to set apart whatever sum might be necessary for masses. I then thought of my patrimony, which seemed to me a paradise; and figured to myself the pleasure that would be mine in revisiting it. But my thoughts were chiefly occupied by Federica, who, it appeared, had never forgotten me: and the youthful feelings with which I was once accustomed to think of her, returned as naturally as if it had been only the night before that I had sauntered with her on the bank of the Guadalquivir. “Well,” said I, within myself, “I have seen the world, and am not the worse, but the better for it; I now know the worth of it, and what it is capable of giving: it has shown me some strange scenes, and taught me some useful lessons; and when I return to Andalusia, I shall not sigh for

unknown enjoyments, and untasted variety, like those who have never stepped beyond their olive grounds ; and if Federica will but excuse my follies, her forgiveness of them will make me love her the more.”

These considerations naturally led me to take a review of my external condition,—in which I found great reason for contentment. Twenty thousand crowns were a very pretty fortune for an Andalusian,—and, added to my patrimony, would make me the richest caballero in Penaflor. As for the señorío, I resolved that Ramirez should still be the purchaser, and that on my little domain he should build a house at no great distance from my own. The whole of the picture was speedily filled up,—and I created a paradise around me.

All these matters being thus settled in my own mind, and to my entire satisfaction, I re-

turned to Ramirez and Violante, who were charmed with my proposal, and who agreed that we should journey in company towards Andalusia, and leave Madrid on the morrow; and it was with no small satisfaction that, soon after sunrise, I found myself seated beside my two friends, and saw our seven mules trot across the dry bed of the Manzanarez. Conversation did not flag by the way,—we spoke both of the past and of the future; and did not fail to enjoy the pleasant contrast between our condition at that time, and two years before, when we ran against each other at the corner of the Alameda of Cadiz,—the one, a half-starved artist, despairing of his mistress—the other, a discarded serving man, without a peseta in his pocket. We blessed ourselves that our lot was cast in Andalusia, as we looked out upon the arid plains of old Castile — its ragged men, and plain-

featured women,—and when we reached the summit of the Sierra Morena, and saw Andalusia spread out at our feet, I could almost say “amen” to the poetical rhapsody that burst from the lips of Ramirez, who, it must be recollectcd, was an artist, and endowed with a greater perception of natural beauty than I could ever pretend to.

“ Friend,” said I to the muleteer, as he was one morning yoking his mules, to set out upon the day’s journey, “ I am mistaken if I have not seen thy face before,—but where, or upon what occasion, it would puzzle me to tell.”

“ I believe,” said the muleteer, “ I am able to assist your grace’s memory. Do you remember, about two months ago, one morning a little after day-break, standing on the bridge of Toledo with a female penitent?”

“ And it was to thee, then, that I committed

her in charge," said I; " and how didst thou acquit thyself of thy duty?"

" As an honest man," replied the muleteer. " She was a sweet lady, and a devout lady too; there was not a church or a chapel by the way-side, that she did not enter, to say an ave: I 'll warrant your grace knows something of the history of that penance."

" No matter what I know," said I; " you conducted her safely to her journey's end?"

" That I did," said the muleteer; " I took her in safety to Valenzuela,—and saw her husband kiss her cheek, and lead her in,—and call her by all the sweet names that so sweet a lady deserved."

Ten days after quitting Madrid, we arrived in the ancient city of Cordova; and so much had my anxiety to reach Penaflor increased as I approached nearer to it, that scarcely would

I allow time to Violante and Ramirez to visit the ancient Mosque ; and two hours after reaching Cordova, we were gliding down the current of my own sweet Guadalquivir. Before noon we had passed Aldea de Rio,—and soon I began to recognise the spots to which I had rambled in my youth : at length, at a broad sweep of the river, “ my native village ! ” said I,—for I descried the hill covered with Indian fig,—and presently, the house of my early days was seen nestling at its foot, half hid in its green and golden-speckled orangery.

It chanced that this very day was the feast of the Patron Saint of Penaflor ; it chanced, also, to be the day before the commencement of the olive gathering, which would have made it a holiday even if there had been no such saint as Saint Nicholas, or if Penaflor had not been under his protection. No wonder, there-

fore, that we heard sounds of festivity rise from the neighbouring meadow by the river side, which lay between my own house and the village.

I resolved to make a circuit, and reach, by paths well known to me, the spot which I knew to be the scene of the festival. It was not without anxiety that I asked myself the question, whether Federica would at once recognise me, and what would be my reception? But it was natural that I should reflect with complacency, upon what indeed I believed to be a truth, that if years had produced any change in me, it was a change for the better. I was but a stripling when I left Penaflor; now, I was a man. My lip was graced by handsome mustachios; my complexion, if less delicate, was more manly; and it was not altogether without anticipations of the sensation which my appear-

ance was likely to occasion at the *fiesta*, that I glanced downward at the well-turned limbs that were bearing me to the scene.

As I approached nearer, the thrum of the guitar, and the tic-a-tic-tic of the castanets, announced that the *bolero* was going on; and a few minutes more brought me to the edge of the thicket of aloes, that inclosed the space where all the village was assembled. Frederica was there—the queen among them all,—the true goddess of the festival.

Frederica was scarcely sixteen when I left Penaflor,—a charming *maja* for a boy: now, the few years that had been added, had but thrown a cast of thoughtfulness into her countenance, which I found even more charming than in my absence I had pictured it to myself. Her figure, elastic and graceful as it had ever been, was now rich in all the charms of woman; and as

my eye followed her footsteps, I said within myself, “Federica, if thou wilt be mine, I’ll live and die in Penaflor.”

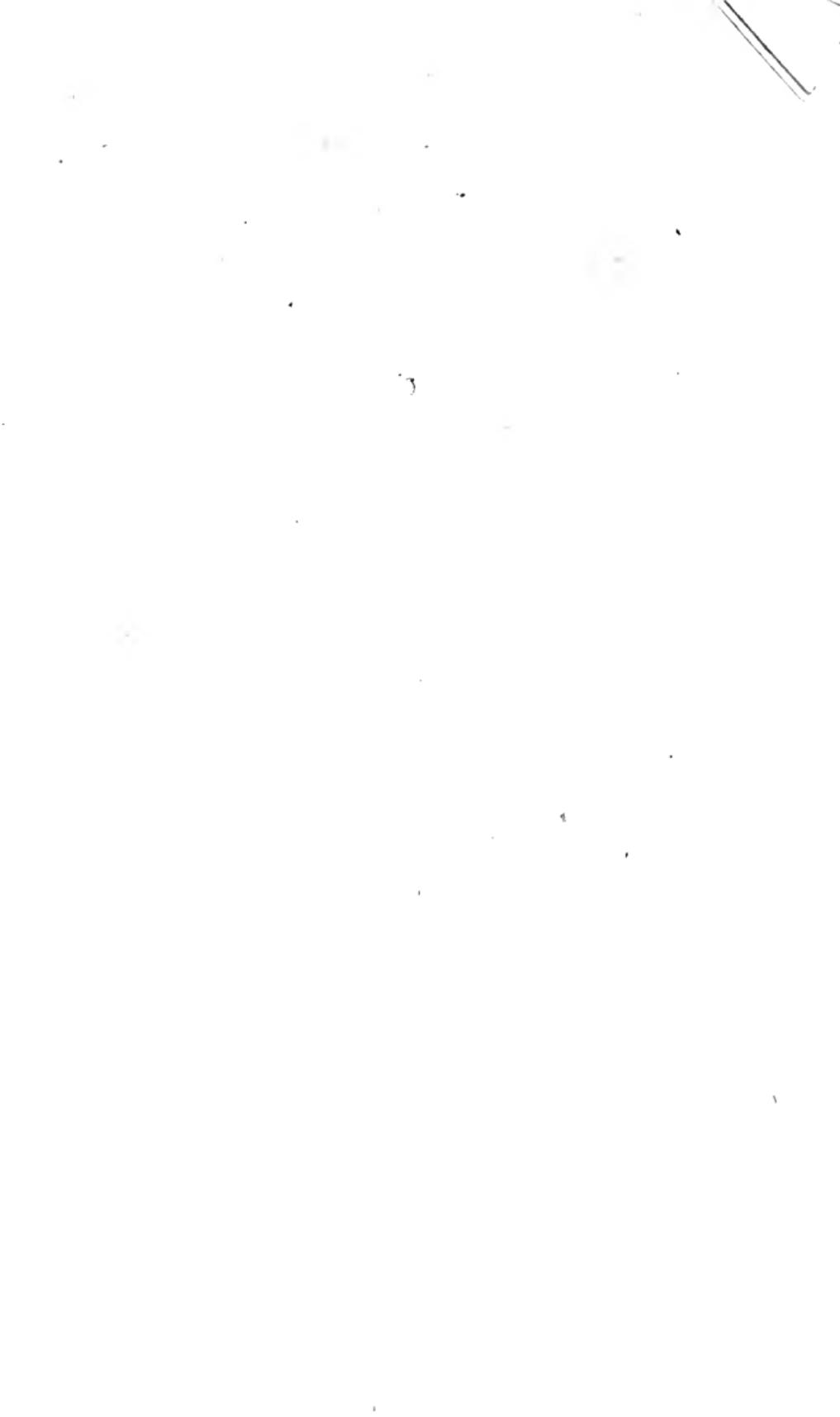
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I kept my vow. Federica forgave my desertion of her and Penaflor, and remembered only all that I had suffered in my absence. She received me as a repentant,—dismissed all her lovers,—consented to be wooed,—and, finally, to be my wife. A good and loving wife like Federica, might make a good husband of a worse man than Pedro de Segura. Twenty years we have now lived together; and during all that time, my wishes have never strayed from Federica and Penaflor. The adventures that finally brought me to my native village, have been often the subject of our discourse. To all that was gay, Federica gave her smiles; and we sometimes laughed in chorus; while,

to the relation of others' woes, or my own perils, she gave her sympathy, and oftentimes her tears. The house of Ramirez and Violante stands within sight of our own,—and we have been accustomed, every afternoon, to take our chocolate and our cup of Malaga, seated together by the river side,—while the children have been playing among the palmitos, or sitting beneath an old olive tree, at their supper of prickly pear and grapes, and the whitest bread in the world.

Peace and contentment have been ours;—and sons and daughters have grown around us. My sons have never deserted me, because I have never used them unkindly; and for our daughters, we have found husbands to their mind.

LONDON:
MANNING AND SMITHSON, PRINTERS,
LONDON HOUSE YARD, ST. PAUL'S.





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